

Budget proposals

DCC and Rajuk have dismally failed to maintain and develop the metropolis. The new budget may provide for the BMRE of the management structure; which may later be replicated in other City Corporations. There is no point in running these municipalities in the old colonial fashion of tiny cities of a century ago. It is hoped that the BUET new degree course on Urban Planning and Management would be found useful in managing the overcrowded cities.

The Finance Ministry has to discourage useless import of luxury and non-essential items flooding the consumer market (cosmetics, trash fast food and soft-fruit drinks); many of which are smuggled in.

While the business apex bodies can ventilate their grievances, the middle class suffer due to lack of representation at the policy making stage. There should be ceiling on fees expenses at the English medium schools and private universities, most of which are beyond the reach of more than 90 per cent families. Is the Education Ministry aware of the extents of foreign items (books and stationary) prescribed in the English-medium schools? The total annual turnout is staggering. The Government is silent on this issue.

More assembly plants of different types of goods have to be set up in the country, to bring down the retail prices and cost of servicing. Thousands of CNG filling stations for vehicles are required all over the country. The private sector alone cannot handle this capital, hence foreign tie-ups have to be encouraged.

The private telephone booths are still charging taka five per local call. The government made a lot of noise about regulations, but is silent now, and this informal sector continues to thrive, as there is no sign of reduction of the waiting period for a new telephone which is at present about three year (and too costly to install).

NCB branches which fail to computerise their services at their branch end may be closed down after Dec 31, 2002. I am not getting the monthly return on my current account (in Dhaka) for decades! How's that?

Some landlords do not issue stamped money receipts (mine does not even show the amount), and the private car parks in the shopping areas issue unauthorised and informal tickets which the tax dept might not accept. A lot of regularisation exercises are pending in the revenue side. These loopholes have to be plugged.

And how about issuing plastic ID cards to pensioners, for availing of government concessions at different places? No deal, observe the cynics.

A Zabr
Dhaka

Not the knee; it is the heel that matters

The newspapers in Bangladesh are awash with the PM's knee. Without knowing the nature of the exact procedure, I only can surmise that certain degenerated tissue was discarded and possibly still remained fixed in formaldehyde jars in some Manhattan Laboratory. I surmise that a significant amount of money was spent. But I am certain that such procedure could have been done safely in Dhaka.

But that's not the point I plan to elucidate in this abbreviated essay. I rather shall strive to surmise, the real aetiology of this degeneration that has rendered a powerful woman arthritic, that she can't walk nimbly, that she can't kick high.

In the mean time, a few powerful members of her very own party got their heart stilled by mindless vio-

lence. Hearts of their mournful wives are still, but still beating! In the mean time, scores of children lost their parents. In the mean time, we have seen launch sinking. In the meantime, many a daughter lost their innocence. And in the mean time, Bangladesh has lost some of its remaining innocence.

PM is back in home now. She has a better knee. We want to see her kick and kick high. Let's have a kick start. Let's kick start the engine of law and justice. And let's start from her very home.

If the PM fails, the degeneration is definite to go distal. And we all know, what lies distal to the Achilles' knee. It is the HEEL.

Mohammad Zaman
USA

Welcome back PM

The Prime Minister is back. And as I suspected, the BNP activists turned the PM's home coming into a political occasion to celebrate in the name of making banners, processions, festoons, requisition of trucks and buses and things of the sort which we have seen so often in not so distant past.

Till date we haven't informed how much money was spent on the PM's

ceremony of the taking over of office by the newly appointed Chief of the Naval Staff, Rear Admiral Shah Iqbal Mujtaba, ndc, psc, BN.

This event assumed all the more importance as it took place in the presence of the Prime Minister and Defence Minister, Begum Khaleda Zia. I wonder how could ETV skip an event of such national importance. On the other hand, this news item was treated as one of the top news stories in BTV's 8 o'clock news bulletin, which followed immediately after ETV's news bulletin.

Whatever might be ETV's information dissemination agenda, the decision to skip the news did not represent sound news selection judgement... I would expect ETV to be more careful about its news treatment in future.

Tashdiq Mannan
Department of International Relations, DU

"Cricket is for the rich"

I am writing this letter to counter the argument that cricket is wastage of money and skill and time (June 5). The writer has said that cricket does not require any skill or technique or

shocked me. He congratulated the Information Minister for his decision of banning satellite channels.

Mr Rahman, in the name of protecting Islamic values and Muslim society do you want to see Bangladesh turning into another Afghanistan? Where do you want to take Bangladesh? Do you want the world to recognise this country as a fundamentalist one?

Rafiq Bin Hai
Mymensingh

My view on channel ban

Allow me to begin by thanking you for giving your readers the chance to express their views on various issues. I have been following the letters on the channel ban with great interest, and I am finally prepared to share my views with the readers.

This is a reply to a letter by Mr. Yahya (May 30) and to a letter by Mr. Mohammad Rahman (May 22). I fully support Mr. Yahya's reply to Mr. Rahman's letter.

Mr. Rahman has demonstrated that he is indeed a very close-minded person, not receptive to new thoughts and ideas. Mr. Rahman, people like you cannot

popular tutor prescribed the questions without any alternatives, all of which were common including even the comprehension and the Explanation of sentence in Bengali.

This is nothing but destroying the noble mentality and the habit of many good students in such early stage. In fact this is a big damage done to the students. My question is whether the Education Minister is aware of this type of unfair means or not? Mere showing of catching unfair means in the exam hall will not eradicate corruption in our education sector. Starting from framing question to publishing, storing, whole system need to be monitored and maintained through a full proof system. Otherwise the pilferage in the chain involved will eat up and void all good intention to make a fair exam. I urge upon the education ministry to enquire the matter and stop this before it grasps the whole society and the system.

Ahmed H Imran
Uttara, Dhaka

Muslim mythology?

Last week in a television interview aired on our national poet Nazrul Islam's birthday, the former Chief Justice of Bangladesh Mustafa Kamal said that Nazrul was fully conversant with both Muslim mythology and Hindu mythology; and never made a mistake in his writings that were related with Mulsim mythology. He used the term "Muslim mythology" for several times.

The word 'mythology', according to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* is a body of myths, and myth means a traditional narrative usually involving supernatural or imaginary persons: 'a widely held but false notion', 'a fictitious person, thing or idea' etc.

There is no mythology in Islam. All that happened from the time of our Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are recorded history. All that happened or existed before him and are part of our beliefs are either sayings of Allah in the Quran or the sayings of the Prophet (PBUH) as recorded in Hadith. So there is no 'mythology' in Muslim beliefs or traditions. It is unfortunate that a person of the stature of Mr. Justice Mustafa Kamal uttered the term 'Muslim mythology'.

I believe it was a mistake that must not be repeated.

RD Oureshi
Dhaka

Concrete slabs

This is in regards to Mr Shameer's letter (May 30) asking for the removal of the concrete slabs from the Mogbazar intersection.

I would just like to remind him that his pleas should be directed to the Mayor of course but do not forget Gaffar Bhuiyan MP and his construction firm, which remember has never done this type of work before, Surma International.

We shouldn't forget him, as I am sure the families of those who died haven't.

Peter
Dhaka

Government bans

Arranging beauty contest!

We are surprised to learn from a national English daily that marketing agent of 'LOLANE' is going to organise a beauty contest "LOLANE Miss Bangladesh Contest- 2002".

Being the third largest Muslim country it is shameful for us to even consider arranging such contest. Even in India such type of beauty contest is not welcomed by many. There was protest and demonstration against beauty contest in India. The beauty contest is against the dignity of women, against our culture and against our religion as well.

We strongly protest it and request the organiser as well as all the authorities concern including the PM, who is also a woman, not to arrange beauty contest and uphold the image of Bangladeshi women in a dignified manner.

Md. Habibur Rahman Bhuiyan
Dhaka

Picture of Miss Universe 2002 was illustriously covered in most of the electric and print media. Role of some progressive media has enormously stunned us regarding the issue. Especially by those who are deemed to have committed to uphold the women's issues and try to emancipate our women folk from their subordinate condition in the society.

In the name of beauty contest our sisters are exposing themselves to the vested groups. We would like to know do these and Miss Universe and Miss World know how they are being made the worst product of multinational companies? Teenage beauty contestants may not be aware of their position how they are belittling themselves in particular and the women folk in general.

two-stroke vehicles

In a reprise of an earlier decision the government has announced that by September 1st all two-stroke vehicles will be off the roads. Does anyone want to take bets on how many days after Sept. 1st BNP will back down? Given the lack of alternative forms of public transport I'll give it a week.

The government blithely announces that petrol and diesel engine cars will be converted to CNG. Pray tell exactly how many of the thousands of government owned vehicles have been converted? Not one. On top of which the government is still floating tenders for new vehicles specifying that they must be petrol or diesel.

If BNP is serious about conversion to CNG then why not start with the PM's Mercedes? Followed by

Hasina is consoling a journalist!



Hasina, Hazari and the journalists

Don't you just love the hypocrisy of our political leaders? In the back page of your paper on June 4 there's a photograph of Sheikh Hasina consoling a wounded journalist. It was during her regime that attacks on journalists became a routine with senior AL men like Joynal Hazari meting out punishment to those whose reports offended them. It was during AL's rule that Bangladesh joined the ranks of countries like Zimbabwe where it's not safe to offend gangster politicians.

Where is Hazari anyway?

Tristram
Dhaka

the Presidents (older) one and the rest of the cabinet.

MA
Dhaka

"Exhaust from diesel engines causes asthma"

Following on from the letter of MA Obaydullah concerning exhaust from diesel fumes, may I suggest one very modest, and, I would have thought, achievable reform requiring government action? And another improvement on the present pollution on public transport that is within the ability of most of us?

For over two years now, on my regular bus trips to Mymensingh and my irregular ones to Dhaka, I have been mystified by the very long time the drivers spent revving their engines before departure. Having been a car driver in the UK for 40 years, I could not understand the necessity of this when the climate, far from that of the UK, does not demand that a cold engine be 'warmed-up'.

One day, having sat in my bus (engine revving) for around 30 minutes, handkerchief to nose, with the exhaust of the next bus in line, just outside my window, also spewing out its filth, I suddenly snapped. Got out of my seat, left the bus, marched over to the adjacent bus driver, put my hand through his window to turn his engine off and

distance bus journey to stop it. Personally, I have found that some tut-tutting and a few audible comments are usually enough for most Bangladeshis can be very considerate - when asked to be.

But, one day on a trip to Dhaka, my heart sank when a young helper was sent out by the two passengers whose seat was opposite to mine - and returned with two packets of cigarettes. I decided on a classic Bangladeshi-Status-Person response (i.e. no eye contact, tones of ringing authority and, in my case, no apology at all for my odd Bangla) - "Cigarettes in buses not appropriate in all countries" - and it worked!

May I urge all your readers, to participate far more actively in restraining the forces of mindless selfishness? Do we not become civilised by learning to be part of the human race instead of totally self-centred? We all need a lot of help with that - for most of our lives, actually. Otherwise our own shortcomings become an aspect of the spoiling of our society, which is, in itself, an aspect of 'pollution'.

Angela MV Robinson (Rev Mrs)
St Andrew's Mission, Haluaghat

Civil servants' pay
This July civil servants in China will be given salary rises across the board. The ultimate goal of the Chinese is to emulate the Singaporean system where public sector pay is comparable to that of

I often pause to wonder how uncommon common sense is in our country. Only the other day I was at a discussion program and mobile phones were ringing every other second. The invited guests could very well understand that the ringers from different corners of the room were interrupting and distracting the speakers as well as the audience. Even after an announcement to put off the ringers, they could not care less.

Worse still, after a loud ringing, some of them took the call and dared to converse without lowering their voices or flinching the least bit.

I appreciate the urgency of a particular situation but that is for the individual himself, not for others to be disturbed in the process. It is really sad to see people coming to discussion programs and doing everything but listening!

Nadia
Gulshan,
Dhaka

Gun control-- yes, no, very good

I believe the time has come for Bangladesh to allow each and every citizen to be given the rights to carry a small firearm for private use. There are many countries around the world, which allows citizen without any criminal records to get such weapons at ease. No prior government certificate is necessary expect a small federal clearance. Countries like USA has such rule.

The main reason I'm advocating this step is to give protection to the less fortunate people of Bangladesh. When an innocent people has a gun, he can very easily shoot a mugger or murderer. What other way is there rather than self-protection.

Also, each and every children, especially the girls at school level should be taught martial art as compulsory education. In dire situation that may cause less harm to many and might even help many victims from becoming a victim again.

A well-wisher, USA

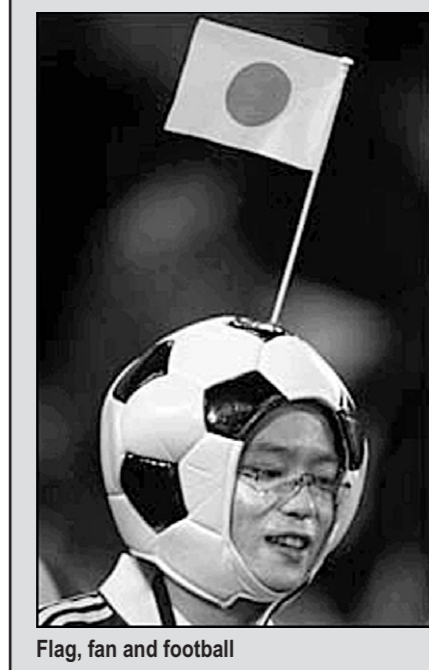
The other side of helping hands

It was an important issue that Ms. Tania has discussed in her letter "Helping the helping hands-- the domestic helpers. I do agree that there are many of us who torture these helpers in various ways but there are some of us as well who at least try to improve their lifestyle. But this helping issue is a two way process, whereas we give them facility of teaching them the basic subjects and also prayers, there's hardly any response from their side.

I've even tried to give my domestic helper two days holiday per week, not to mention the financial assistance to her other family members. Still she's never satisfied.

Those days of physical torture don't exist anymore, on the contrary we working women always try to keep these helpers happy so that we don't lose them. If still someone says that these helpers

To the over-enthusiastic football fans



Flag, fan and football

I have recently observed that a group of people indulges into fighting with each other regarding hoisting the flag of the countries they support in the World Cup Football. They hoist these flags on the rooftop of different buildings, markets etc and enter into arguments with another group supporting a different team. The supporters write graffiti, bring out processions, carry banners etc in support of their teams.

It is very unfortunate that we are wasting time on an unnecessary topic i.e. supporting a different nation and hoisting an alien flag. Everybody is fond of some sort of games and sports and it is quite natural to support a team of a certain country. But it appears very indecent when these supporters get carried away.

Some people devoid of common sense, set up TV on the road to watch a match forgetting it might create hindrance for the passers-by. During emergency, an ambulance carrying sick people may get delayed due this nuisance on the road. I request the supporters to restrain themselves from disturbing others by their over enthusiasm. Enjoy and let others enjoy the FIFA World Cup 2002.

Uttam Kumar Das
Chittagong

treatment in New York. However, from the *milad* and *dua* arranged nation-wide by her party for her early recovery, we could at least have a hint of how much public money they are ready to waste in the name of the PM.

And we should not forget that her going abroad for treatment was not a matter of great pride for us. It only speaks poor quality of treatment available in angladesh. Things haven't at all improved in three decades. Gangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman went to London for removing his gall bladder. He could not have faith in our doctors and neither could Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

So until our health sector is improved and our local doctors can earn the trust of the patients let's not stop others from craving for better treatment abroad. Life is precious to everyone be it the Prime Minister or an ordinary person.

Mamun
Dhaka

ETV's news sense!

As a keen follower of national, international and regional news, both on the print and the electronic media, I was thoroughly disappointed at Ekushey TV's blackout of an important national news event in its prime time news bulletin on the evening of 04 June 2002. The news item in question relates to the

fitness, then how come there's such a big deal about leg spin and off-spin, which are two different techniques? Don't you think it takes fitness to bowl fast and bowl yorkers, then why are both Shoab Akhtar and Brett Lee, the two fastest bowlers around, so fit? Cricket fans like me know how much technique and precision is required to pull or play a beautiful straight drive, something the writer won't realise because he doesn't even like cricket.

The writer argues that a cricketer cannot say he has performed well or badly on a cricket field. Let me give you an example, when Brian Lara hit 375 or when Anil Kumble took 10 wickets in 1 innings, that is an example of good, no actually great performances. When Gibbs dropped Steve Waugh in the World Cup Super Six match that was a poor show.

Coming to the point that children waste their youth and time after cricket, I am sure that's better than smoking cigarette or taking drugs. Cricket is a passion for us teenagers, it's something to look forward to all year around.

If you think the outfits and paraphernalia of cricket is wastage, then maybe football is wastage of time as well. And so tennis, golf and all other games.

Lastly the writer said that the government should not waste money on cricket. But tell me which other sport is Bangladesh good at except for cricket?

Afreen Khan
Dhaka

BDR excesses

Our politicians have corrupted and demoralised the police force to such an extent that they no longer even follow the orders of their masters. DB men run their own extortion and kidnapping rackets without paying any heed to ministers bleating for law and order.

The government typical in its short-sightedness orders the BDR, according to your paper, for the first time to assist the police in curbing street crime. The only result was harassment of innocents and now BDR pitching in with the police in extrajudicial killings.

So what have the anonymous high level officials decided to do to curb BDR excesses? Probably just sent a note saying, don't kill random people or something in that vein.

Pan, Dhaka

Tax the cable subscribers

I absolutely agree with the idea that our government should impose heavy tax on satellite TV channels. It will kill two birds with one stone.

The government will earn some money at the expense of its own 'unredeemable, incorrigible sin' and at the same time the irresponsible parents will be penalised.

After all only a privileged section of society consisting of mainly youngsters of English medium schools want those channels.

Shukla Mirza, On e-mail

Was it right?
Mr. Rahman's letter (May 22)

Good justice is defeated or not defeated



Good justice, bad justice and no justice

Our Honourable Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed delivered a speech on "Importance of Judicial Reforms in Bangladesh" as the chief guest at luncheon meeting on AmCham, "people want fair justice as quickly as possible but the present legal system is the archaic one and good justice is defeated". Hats off to our polymath Law Minister to pontificate the legal reality from the angle of naivety.

The government has launched RAF or the Rapid Action Force to control, guide and supervise the efforts. To avert the skywards criminality, terrorism, hijackings and political killings, the policy makers have included paramilitary (BDR) in their law-restoring endeavour. To handle the border problems is not same to handle the deteriorating law and order situation genesis of multiple socio-political irregularities.

People of this country want fair justice as quickly as possible for the death of innocent fish trader Mohammad Shohel killed by the BDR under the existing archaic judicial system.

Salim Gossai
Dhaka

But how our conscious publishers and reporters are covering these disgraceful events aggravating the situation from bad to worse?

Mamunur Rahman
Department of Women's Studies, DU



Is beauty anti women?

are deprived of their rights, I don't think all of it is true. Our country's economic condition should also be considered because a great number of the helpers come to us for food only. So the free education we try to provide them is simply for their own benefit.

I hope and wish the government would do something to make these domestic helpers happy because we individually can't do anything significant.

Basmiah Jahir, Dhaka

How do you pay for it? Cancel or halve the ADP, fire half the 3rd class employees and put all remaining officers through a rigorous third party review dismissing all the unnecessary ones.

Unless the present pay scale is increased to a realistic level, corruption can never be brought under control.

Cervantes
Dhaka

Mobile mania