द्यादि होत्य

Dealing with dengue

The honourable Health Minister instructed the doctors at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) to take proper care of dengue patients. Now, let us examine the word 'proper care' in the perspective of facilities available at DMCH. The hospital, which is one of the premier medical institutions in Bangladesh cannot be considered as an ideal hospital. Stagnant water, considered as ideal breeding places of the Aedes mosquito, can be easily found around the hospital premises. Blood transfusion department does not have enough blood bags let alone concentrated platelets or fresh frozen plasma to meet the need of the inpatients. Sharing the same ward with patients with dengue fever along with ideal breeding places for mosquitoes make it even more possible for the disease to spread within the hospital.

As an understaffed, under equipped treatment facility, the doctors of DMCH are already providing the best possible level of care to their patients. Health Minister's speech to the doctors is like beating a dead horse and I believe that this will not bring about any change in the way the patients are getting treated at DMCH or in any other hospitals for that matter. It is a failure of the government in implementing proper vector surveillance and control methods in past few years during which time people are getting killed every year. It is appalling to observe over and over again that whenever some disease break out as epidemics, the politicians complete their duty by advising others about what to do but not performing their own duty.

As we are emphasising the need for better supportive care for the patients, we must not lose sight of the fact that prevention is the only hope to control this dreadful disease and providing better treatment facilities is the only real way that will enable the doctors to render "proper

Dr. Towhid Salam Los Angeles, California, USA

With a catastrophic history and warning for the future, dengue fever has set foot in the city again. This time also, although the situation is not as drastic as it has been last year, it is with great aggression that has already caused many to move into hospitals for coming round and others to remain threatened.

Before the election of a new mayor for Dhaka, we have had our ears tired of hearing about the measures that the present elected person had vowed to guench the havoc of dengue in the city. As far as the present situation is concerned, any remarkable progress has barely been made concerning the promise, except for exertions to break it.

Violence in Malibagh and mosques

Soon more will be revealed about the violence in Malibagh over the possession of a mosque.

Anyway I am sick of the profusion of illegal mosques in Dhaka. First of all most of these mosques are built on illegally held land and are expanding at the cost of public land. Secondly and I don't mean to insult

anvone's religious sensibilities but I doubt if God ever intended to use loudspeakers five times a day. With mosques every thirty feet, the sound of competing muezzins is extreme. If you must give the azan, then at least regulate it so that only one mosque can call for prayers within a

certain radius. Mosques built on public land and those encroaching on parks and roads should also be demolished. There should be a regulatory section within Rajuk to govern the number, size, etc. of religious

Withdrawal of baby taxis: Where is the alternative transportation?

wish the people in Dhaka were aware of the removal of the baby taxis from the streets of Dhaka from some time before. If that had been done, those not so young office workers who cannot find bus routes to go to places like Hatkhola or Karwan Bazar from places like Dhanmandi and Uttara would be

Dhaka monorail

Tripping Dhaka's rail-fantastic

If the people of Dhaka want a

better transport system, they

should embrace the HighRoad

dual-sided single beam mono-

rail proposed jointly by the

Georgia Monorail Consortium,

Inc. (USA) and Associated

Resources Management

Rather than 500 buses with

a cost of at least USD 200,000

for a chassis and final con-

well prepared for the drastic steps

suddenly taken up by the govern-

ment. Without adequate notice to

the sufferers who cannot and do not

own cars to go far distances to their

work places in time this is going to

mean serious problem. A month's

official notice is not sufficient for

saving up to buy a car which would

cost at least Taka 3 lakh and on top

of which would be the chauffeur's

pay which would swallow up a large

We are told on TV by Communi-

cation Minister Barrister Nazmul

Huda that there would be enough

CNG vehicles plying the streets, but

as such, till today, there certainly

aren't enough CNG vehicles for the

thousands of office goers who once

went to and fro their work place in

Already, on hartal days, when I've

portion of one's salary.

Company of Dhaka.

were no proper smooth roads to cross over and the "kacha" roads with their mud. slush and stones have bounced me to and fro. despite my whispered prayers till my tongue was drv. Also, when there are no baby taxis plying, there are the dark and dangerous underpasses to overcome where hoodlums wait to attack ladies and even men

It would be advisable for the government to postpone their decision for removing the baby taxis altogether within such a short period.

A concerned citizen

"Add meter on CNG-run auto rickshaws"

Fazley Elahi Mahmud and Shaheen's letter (August 16) has raised two very important issues which needs to be dealt with immediately for the consumers' interest to get the maximum benefit and protection out of the banning of twostroke auto rickshaws.

It is absolutely essential that the government goes through an immediate due diligence exercise and implement the following for all CNG-

struction in Dhaka, totalling

USD 10 million from the Trea-

sury (collected as taxes on the

people), the GMC/ARMCO

monorail would cost the Trea-

sury and the people nothing

except the right to build and

operate the system. Construc-

tion money comes from inter-

moving 120 people per hour

a. A fare structure that is justifiable.

c. Same rule made for taxicabs that

they have to go to any destination

the passengers want should be

applicable for CNG-run auto rick-

d. A code of conduct for the drivers.

e. Any infringements, a consumer

should be able to identify the driver

and report the same to a specific

the same day that the government

was mulling over the use of meters

for the CNG-run auto rickshaws.

quoted as saying "we are yet to take

a decision on this...". Due promi-

nence was also given in the dailies

to the statements made on behalf of

the government that the decision to

It was reported in your daily on

Further, with 500 buses

national sources

run auto rickshaws:

b. Mandatory meters.

based on "one's right to live". Like the banning of polythene bags, this decision of the government is no doubt commendable. We just want the government to go the extra mile by implementing the above recommendations based on "the consumers' right to pay fair prices and due respect".

A Thinker Dhaka

A vicious circle

So, another countrywide hartal called by the main opposition party, Awami League, on August 15 to press its demands passed off.

Like any other hartal, this one also could not touch the hair of the people in power, only harmed the economy of the country. Now BNP (with its minor allies) is in power. Does AL think that BNP people are so patriotic that if it (AL) can harm the economy of the country by calling hartal, they (BNP) will meet its demands to save the country's economy from being harmed?

If it is so, then it's a solace to the weary people of this country that our political parties may publicly hurl abusive words and make grimace to each other; and accuse each other of being unpatriotic, but in the core

each at 15 miles per hour

(average) for 12 hours per day

you provide transport for a

maximum of 720,000 people

per day at a slow speed. To

move as many people as the

monorail, you would need over

2,000 buses in the city streets,

With the GMC/ARMCO

monorail you could move up to

3,110,000 people at 35 miles

per hour for 12 hours per day,

Not only would the buses

cost more initially, but they

have to be replaced at 12-year

intervals, adding to local taxes.

GMC/ARMCO monorail, not

against it. It's better for the

President, Georgia Monorail

of their hearts they hold each other

BNP, in the opposition, it would call

hartal at its sweet will, with the same

conviction its political foe held

against them. It's nothing but a

"A rude awakening'

It was very difficult to resist the

temptation of not responding to the

thought-provoking, nostalgia-

evoking opinion, of a group of young

teachers of the Dhaka University

August 4). They all have touched

my heart. While reading the opinion

it seemed to me that the writers

were echoing my sentiment as well.

I will not be able to reciprocate the

eloquent way that these young

faculties have expressed their

When AL was in the power and

Support should be for the

adding to the traffic.

all above the traffic.

people of Dhaka.

Consortium, Inc.

patriotic.

vicious circle.

Faruque Hasan

Dhanmandi, Dhaka

William E. Owen, P.E.

Marietta, Georgia, USA

helplessness, but I surely can relate to their feelings. I loved to teach and wanted to be the best teacher in the whole wide world. And believe me there was and still are many others like you and me. People would tell me that I really did not need to go to work everyday, as I was a Dhaka University teacher.

Most people do not and did not realise, how much work a teacher has to perform in the form of teaching, research, grading, supervising, doing administrative work etc. I remember many of us going to the university even during summer vacations. Certainly, there were times when we used to chat and have lighter moments, but more often than not, we were busy with some kind of work.

There is no dearth of talented students, or dedicated teachers. However, there is a lack of efficient teacher-student relationship. The students need role models in teachers and fellow students, with whom they can relate and emulate. The channels of communication must be open and based on fairness. Students are rarely given credit and responsibility. The mere fact that they are Dhaka University students is a major achievement, given the competition in the admission pro-

Too many people have played with their raw (at times naïve) courage and vulnerability. Once I had asked a student of mine why he was into politics. He responded by saying that he had come straight from the village, and without politics he would never get a seat in the hall. I was speechless and also sad because I had no power to arrange a seat for him using fair means. They have been used as pawns for larger ulterior motives. It is true that a microscopic proportion of the student community thrive on these activities. All this has earned too much bad publicity for Dhaka University, as a whole, for too long.

It is time that the university population and the larger, general population realised that this still is the largest learning institution in the nation and probably one of the best in the land. It gives me hope that, with more teachers like these opinion writers, all is not lost. Let us take out all the superficial colours and labels and be nothing more, or lessbut good old teachers.

Mahmudul Huq Khan New Jersey, USA

Aren't we frustrated?

As a student of Dhaka University it is turning out to be an utterly frustrating situation.

After the Shamsunnahar Hall incident I wondered how could that brutal act take place in a female hall inside university campus. At the same time I thought that the government would take proper action and the offenders would be punished right away. My wonder knew no bound when I realised that no, this does not bother the government a bit and that it is acting like a blind man. What a country we live in! The police are not there to protect the students but to beat them up and the government is there to protect the police!

Has the removal of the VC and Proctor ensured the security and educational rights for the general students? The university has been closed for about a month and no

sign of reopening as yet. We the general students are going to be the extreme sufferer of the so-called session iam and our valuable academic time is being lost. Is this the precious gift that the country has to offer us, to the future nation builders? Who will pay for our lost time, who will make sure that the students get the congenial atmosphere in their educational institutions? I can certainly say that by playing with the lives of the students the politicians are playing with the future of the country. Naureen Sofia Rahman

Department of Economics, DU

What about excess tax?

In recent days our Finance Minister is "blasting" the Private Banks about "excess profit". But, what about the excess taxes that he has imposed in the name of broadening the "tax-

It is now becoming increasingly difficult in this country to serve honestly in an organisation or to conduct a legitimate business on your own. And the other regrettable side of the whole thing is that the government does not even seem to have the proper system/mechanism in place to ensure that the huge amounts collected all over the country, say in the name of 15% (a high rate in itself compared to the developed countries) VAT, goes to the treasury in time or deposited at

A Distressed Observer

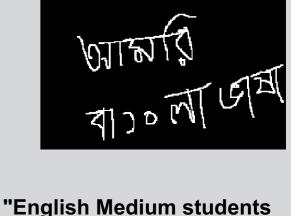
A few good men

The much awaited book by the Chief Advisor of the last caretaker government. Justice Latifur Rahman titled "Tattabadhayak Sarkerer Dinguli O Amar Katha" (Davs of the Caretaker Government and My Story) is finally out. The book is not only tremendously enjoyable for those of us who take a deep interest in contemporary politics of Bangladesh, but it also goes beyond that

In the first part, Justice Rahman speaks about his childhood, education, family background and his early struggle as a rookie lawyer. Sounds almost like a fascinating John Grisham novel, the difference is that, this is fact not fiction. Many young people especially those who have just started out in the legal profession would certainly find encouragement from this book.

The most interesting part for me was how Justice Rahman didn't secure second class because of falling three numbers short from the second class mark. This initial setback changed the entire course of his life if not that of the nation as he decided to study law as his result could not secure him a job in the service sector at that time. We should all get encouraged to learn that there could be minor setbacks in life but they might sometimes lead to better and bigger things, sort of like the "Road not Taken" by Robert

In the second part of his book, Justice Rahman gives a day to day description of his 88-day tenor at the highest office of the nation. Just like his administration, Justice Rahman is honest, candid and puts out his views in simple sentences that even a child would understand. This lets us enter the mind of a Chief Execu-



in trouble"

This refers to the letter "English Medium students in trouble"(August 16). In Notre Dame College admission test, the questions were in Bengali and the answers must be given in Bengali as well. The problem expressed in the letter was regarding the examinees from English medium background.

The writer hinted that the above type of candidate lack in Bengali language and for that reason they could not do up to their expectation in the test. Does this mean that the English Medium students don't know Bengali? This is a very grim picture. We have to know English as well as get education in English to cope with the pace of the world. But by neglecting our own language! The authority concerned should look into the syllabus of English medium schools in this regard. M Abdur Rab

University of Alberta, Canada

tive of a nation and how to face the

difficulties and challenges that a government with limited tenor and responsibilities face everyday. This should also inspire future Prime Ministers to write their autobiographies so that history could judge them taking into consideration their acts in response to the needs of that particular time. I must admit that sometimes the book becomes monotonous when Justice Rahman describes his day to day meetings, this he could have left out and instead focus on the key issues, challenges and personalities that he had to deal with. We admire Justice Rahman when he admits the dilemma that he faced with certain government officials at that time due to their questionable loyalty and efficiency. Yet he talked to them, gained their commitments and eventually gave us a free and fair election that we were proud of. Of course, he had to go through the initial transfers to show as Professor Yunus wrote to him that, "he means business" and done his necessary homework before assuming office.

Often people feel frustrated with today's quality of political leadership. We heard comments like, "Why can't we have the caretaker government longer? Why do we have to wait for 5 years to get good governance just for 3 months?" While we may not get a leader like Justice Latifur Rahman to head a political government in Bangladesh at least in near future, we can always be proud of the fact that there are still a few good men like him left in our society who could show us light during the passing of this dark hour. While we will have to wait for good governance and mature leadership to emerge, Justice Rahman leaves his legacy for the future generation to follow through this book. He deserves another round of thanks from us for

Parvez Murshed, Mirpur, Dhaka

Biman

I thank Mr. K. Asif for picking up the thread-- BIMAN. I agree with him that we do need to look at the overall policy and management structure of Biman. But I have different views. I do not think it's a good idea to invite ex-MDs (successful!) to have another run. The Airline industry and business has transformed to a new kind with the growth of info technology. What we need is businesses savvy, focused and capable Chief Executive with the ability to form and lead a "Management Team". Of course he will have to be backed by matching policies.

We have to recognise that Biman is a commercial entity and is competing with quality world airlines. If we still want to run it just like another government run agency then it's a wastage of time discussing about it.

I do believe that Biman has the potential to grow and prosper. We can definitely offer better services at a sensible cost. But it requires a complete overhaul. As long as we the PEOPLE are paying to keep Biman in the air, it's our demand that Biman gets its acts together and

Abeer Chowdhury Jalan Tantaram, Singapore

Justice

The Mayor of Houston city, who is also in charge of the law enforcing authority, was ticketed for his role in a minor traffic accident recently. A few days ago, the daughter of the governor of Florida was fined and jailed for using a false prescription at a pharmacy.

Do we have to learn anything for the authorities concerned in Bangladesh from this kind of news? Tawfiq Rahman, On e-mail

Bangladesh cricket team In my opinion Bangladesh cricket

team should be built keeping future in mind. While there is no doubt that experience is very crucial in today's cricket but let's not mix experience with participation.

There is no doubt that Bulbul and Akram have played most number of international games for Bangladesh. However I am not so certain about the type of experience they have accumulated during that period. For over a year or so they have failed to serve the national team. BCB has given them enough time to prove their experience. Yet time and again they have failed and that leads us to believe that they have represented Bangladesh but have not gathered that much of 'experience' or 'expertise.' Therefore the younger players should be given opportunity to play and in process hopefully gain vital experi-Naushad Amin, Dallas, Texas,

Zakaat system in our country

and distributing system in our country. Zakaat doesn't mean that we only give saree and lungi to the poor, it is also a good system to buy poor people some equipment so that they can earn their livelihood themselves and become Zakaat-payer. Here are some ideas:

1. By reforming the Zakaat Board we can collect Zakaat in the form of money in a more organised way and buy earning means likes taxicabs, sewing machines for the unemployed and poor population in our country 2. Mainly due to poverty, the youn-

ger generation indulges in crime, if we can provide them some means to earn their bread the increasing rate of criminal activities would decrease 3. Zakaat will help minimise the

economic difference between the rich and the poor. We have Islamic Scholars in the

ruling alliance party, so we can hope to introduce the correct Zakaat law and a Zakaat board. Reaz Mohiuddin

Notre Dame College, Dhaka

Benefit of doubt

Why is it that whenever we face a point of difference, we have to resort to the path of hatred and mistrust? Everyone is either with us or against

Personally I will give every Bangladeshi the benefit of doubt because underneath all the cynicism I almost always found unconditional love for the country. Am I being too naive to think that when every Bangladeshi loves Bangladesh, it should not be hard to

hold hands and work together? What Bangladesh needs now is unity. Irrespective of what our differences are, we need to work together. It is time that we created pressure on our political parties to build bridges between them. A single act towards that end can

start a process of progress We the privileged ones, the educated ones, have the onus of leadership. We need to be what we want our leaders to be. We can start building bridges and start setting examples. These examples can give us the necessary confidence to

change the negative aspects of the With enough sobriety amongst us we might learn to love us as one and create a better tomorrow for all.

Syed Hussain, Atlanta, USA

Great Army and the necessity of fair criticism

This is to lend support to what has been stated by Sohana Khan in her letter (August 14).

If the Armed Forces are fearful of their own countrymen and so want to enforce prohibition on their brethren's entry into cantonment area they should immediately shift to some other place from its present location in Dhaka. If any body looks at the map of Dhaka city including its surroundings and take into consideration the problems being faced by this mega city specially due to lack of adequate number of thoroughfares one will come to the inevitable conclusion that either the cantonment should be shifted to some other location or it should be opened to public movement. Otherwise it will not be possible to adequately address the problem of traffic congestion in Dhaka city.

In this connection I wonder what is the actual intention of the restrictions that are now being imposed on entering into cantonment area. To me it seems highly confusing. To illustrate, there is no restriction on entering the cantonment by a pedestrian. A car can enter on various pretexts, for example falsely declaring that he is going to the CMH or to see somebody residing in cantonment area and so and so forth. Moreover, a person cannot enter into cantonment with a vehicle with yellow number plate even if he is a government servant of any status, but the same person can go there with a black number plated vehicle. Can the existing system prevent an enemy of the armed forces or the country or a saboteur from entering into the cantonment?

I have resided and visited many cities in Pakistan, a country with a military oriented administration. But I have not seen any such restriction on movement of the civilians in the cantonment area. If the Army authority thinks that opening the gates of cantonment is fraught with danger for the nation then it should impose total ban on movement of unauthorised persons inside the cantonments irrespective of whether they try to walk into the cantonment or attempt to enter with a vehicle. Otherwise a person going there on foot will have unrestricted movement and a person going by a vehicle will be subjected to questioning which seems to be totally illogical.

To the list of organisations given by Sohana Khan in her letter I would like to add the names of the four Nationalised Commercial Banks. I wonder what is the logic of having armed force officers in the Board of Directors of these Banks. Is it in any way connected with their professional duty? They have occupied the top positions of the two ports, Biman and the Civil Aviation Authority. Here also question may be raised on what ground the armed forces officers are always considered more suitable for these positions.

There is another very alarming situation going unnoticed. The cantonment areas are increasingly being expanded and the armed forces officers are buying large chunks of lands for their housing projects wherever they can lay hands on. May be, ultimately the whole country will be turned into cantonments and

ban 2-stroke auto-rickshaw was

Vox Populi, Dhaka

"No institution is above criticism or civilian oversight". I do agree with Mr. MA's comment (August 15). This comment is one of the interesting parts of the letter of Mr. MA also. Why? Because if we carefully scan Mr. MA's letter, we will find that he criticised the Army (one of the institutions) much enthusiastically but not the other institutions like the parliament and its parliamentary committees, different ministries, secretariat, government utility services and so on. Isn't this comment a bit self-contradictory? As you said, "No institution is...'

We all including Mr. MA know that the ownership of a five star hotel, golf courses, a filling station, cinemas and what and what not by Army plus the frigate and MIG29 scam are not One Man Shows. Other performers are involved in these as well. Army is just one of the performers. If Army initiated such controversial acts, why did the civil institutions approve those? It surprises me that Mr. MA did not even mention the name of the civil institutions namely the PM's office, Defence and Finance Ministry that are involved in the MIG29 and frigate scam let alone criticise them.

RESTRICTED AREA

Authorized Personnel Only

In his letter Mr. MA said civilians were denied entry into cantonments except retired officers, politicians and civil servants. It means retired officers, politicians and civil servants do not belong to civil society according to Mr. MA's view. As far as I know, people other than those who are involved directly or indirectly in Military affairs are civilians. Then which segment of the society do those retired officers, politicians and civil servants belong to; Military society or Civil society or in between?

Reading Mr. MA's allegation anybody can think that all civilians are prohibited to enter the Cantonment. But from letters written by other sufferers it is clear that only individual civilians are facing problems to enter the Cantonment but not those civilians who enter the Cantonment by BRTC buses and other four wheeler tempos. So Mr. MA may I ask you; who are the civilians according

to your definition

In one paragraph Mr MA said, "Army is relentlessly swallowing up the land" and in another line of the same paragraph he said, "Army is buying land". Do the words buying and swallowing convey the same message? If Army is swallowing the land like ordinary land grabbers keeping the original landowners starved, it's really a problem, I admit but when Army buys land it means Army is compensating the real landowners. If there exists any constitutional restriction/law that prohibits Army from expanding their land, why do our judicial system, parliament and the land department of the government approve that?

In the second last paragraph Mr MA said, "With our finances in such dire straits, wouldn't this be a good time to cut the defence budget?" My question is; will cutting defence budget solve our current economic crisis?

Now come to the foreign investment scenario of Bangladesh. While foreign investment is increasing exponentially in China and India, we are experiencing long lasting draught of foreign investments. Reasons? The most common complaints made by investors are bureaucratic tangle and worst kind of law and order situation. There are other critical problems that exist in other civil institutions are to be resolved along with cutting the defence budget to revive our economy.

Lastly, I would like to request Mr. MA to criticise fairly. Hanging one of the gang members and letting others totally unpunished will not solve the core problems ever.

Rajib (A civilian) Kalabagan, Dhaka

We'd like to give a reply to those who have written the letters "Great Army" on August 14 and 15. One of our concerned citizens has written about the strict security of Chittagong Hill tracts. Chittagong Hill tracts is a sensitive area and it's natural that there would strict security. What's the harm in it? Has the writer forgot-

ten about the kidnapping of three foreigners in the CHT? And then Mr Kishore Pasha, doesn't he know that the civil servants get unbelievable facilities from the government? Most of the ambassadors are civil servants. Career civil servants are not at all deprived in our country.

Any one can enter Cantonment before 11 p.m. and this rule is

Now comes the most tragic point-- defence budget. If the Army isn't strong enough how would they protect our country and the people? Some people can sometimes be so ungrateful. Don't they have anything else to do than writing letters against our brave soldiers who are trying their best to glorify the image of our country!

Nicky & Eritra, Dhaka