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## Flood mitigation



This year's devastating flood has prompted the government to organise a national workshop for recommendations on mitigating the effects of the flood. This is a very good move by the government. It is common knowledge that the flood almost always occurs after continuous rainfall for a week or more or a sea depression. If the rate of discharge of the total water to the Bay does not equal the rate of rain fall, all the banks of the rivers are overflowed, with enormous damage to the villages and towns.

It is not difficult to estimate the approximate amount of rain or water brought by a single sea depression. A single depression of a total area of 35000 square miles (assuming one mile thickness or depth) may carry 20 cubic miles of water (water when vaporized expands 1750 times in volumes), which should be able to cover nearly 20,000 square miles of land under 5 feet of water if not immediately discharged to sea. Thus one method of controlling flood may be to store this volume of water in lakes or haors deepened (200 feet or more) to accommodate this large amount of water from at least one depression. Such a project may have many benefits such as (a) All the villages may be raised to higher levels in the flood prone areas. (b) The agricultural lands may be elevated for year round cultivation by irrigation from the deep lakes. All the roads and infrastructures will be protected from floods. Moreover, all the cities and towns will be saved from sudden floods as the deep lakes will act as a buffer. The lakes will produce enormous amount of fresh water fish for the whole country. A vast irrigation network can be visualized from the stored water in the dry season. The deep lakes will recharge all the underground aquifers nearby. Even the arsenic menace may be reduced by the underground water flow generated by these very deep lakes.

**Prof MF Islam (retired)**  
Shamoly

### End of Veerappan

Koose Muniswamy Veerappan, with a five million rupee bounty on his head, had to die at last in a shoot-out with the police. The police had to move heaven and earth to get this most wanted criminal, accused of killing more than 100 people and also thousands of elephants for their tusks and smuggling ivory and sandalwood worth millions of dollars. In Bangladesh crossfire has become a cliché, thanks to RAB activities.

If it had happened in Bangladesh, the torch-bearers of human rights would have got a chance to get some media coverage. These so-called human rights activists surprisingly remain unruffled when an innocent student dies in a shoot-out between factions of student bodies or a man gets robbed after getting his salary. If someone demands a ban on student politics, the same human rights activists will shout at the top of their voice. These people should think more about the common people than getting media coverage and establishing an intellectual image.

**Saif**  
Dhaka

### National Anthem and mobile phone

Every independent nation has its own national anthem. We also have a national anthem. It is sung and played with due respect on particular occasions. Whenever or wherever we hear this song, we show our respect to it by standing instantly. It cannot be compared to other songs because it has got the honour of being the National Anthem of our nation.

But now-a-days the music of the National Anthem is often heard in the mobile phone. It is not clear to me whether the mobile phone users are adding to or undermining the honour of the National Anthem by playing its music.

I earnestly request DS readers to express their views on this issue.

**Md Abdur Rahim**  
Assistant Teacher  
Comilla Zilla School

### Poor BTB maintenance

I find that in my locality (Mohammadpur) the BTB fixed telephone overhead lines (flexible wires) installed from the street poles to the subscribers' buildings around are erected at too low a height, with the result that some high-rise loaded trucks snap some bunches of wires frequently. That causes interruption of service for a few days (never restored in one single day). Frequently, I have found one end of the torn telephone wires lying on the streets.

Surely, the BTB is following some national or international standards during construction and installation of telephones to ensure safety and maintenance efficiency. Now the BTB has to compete with the private sector in fixed and mobile telephone networks. Lower costs are not enough, without superior service performance.

**Abdali**  
Dhaka

### A curse?

Going through the dispatches and commentaries of foreign journalists, it is clear that both Bush and Blair have few professional supporters from the US and the allies now bogged down in Iraq.

Iraq is different from sparsely populated and mountainous

Afghanistan, under-developed and economically backward. Saddam's regime was becoming a matter of concern to the US-backed Israel (artificially created in 1948 by vested international groups), as Iraq was the most organised Muslim military power in the world.

The US now cannot back out of Iraq, without losing face (check the earlier track records in Korea and Vietnam). The international mass media is flooded with political analyses and commentaries. There are other factors, which the materialists ignore.

What are the effects of prayers (doa) by saints, mystics, sufis, peers and other personalities divinely inspired?

The western aggressors in Iraq are now being subjected to long-term rearward actions, which military might and power cannot solve.

In regional politics, there are also communication gaps for interna-

Socialism and materialism. No escape!

Therefore it is an illusion to believe that the lone superpower would have its own way in imposing standards on different civilisations and regions. It is too late for Uncle Sam to retract he has to pay the compensation for military indiscretions. Grabbing natural energy resources is not a holy goal! Terrorism is being publicised and tackled in the wrong way by the West. It is not a religious issue, but has more economic leaning (murderous disparities). The approach of the affluent West is not correct; hence the details would create problems.

**A Husnain**  
Dhaka

### US presidential election and Israel

Independence of Palestine is the

candidates neither condemn the Israeli atrocities on the Palestinians, nor do they come forward with any concrete proposal for the solution of the decades old Palestine issue.

It is said that knowledge comes early but wisdom lingers. We strongly feel, believe and practically experience and witness that the lone superpower, and its puppet, Israel, would never be able to stop international terrorism even with their hydrogen bombs and intercontinental ballistic missiles, helicopter gunships and bulldozers, unless and until Palestine achieves independence and US troops are withdrawn from Afghanistan and Iraq.

**OH Kabir**  
Wari, Dhaka-1203

### Savar model town

Close to Dhaka, Savar can be a modern model town. This will benefit the people in many ways. The model town will attract a huge number of people from Dhaka city and Tongi areas, thus reducing pressure on them. Dhaka city will be relieved of traffic jam to a great extent. This will help office-goers and the business community. Savar may grow into a metropolitan satellite. My suggestions to modernise Savar are as follows:

Law enforcers have to be posted in greater numbers. There should be more camps. Their presence must give security to the residents. Security of life and property is wanted by people. The Savar municipality has to be upgraded with funds and development programmes (duty audited). The aim of all these is to provide modern amenities. Rajuk must quicken the implementation of Dhaka City Master Plan. Savar should be connected to Dhaka by more highways.

I am inviting experts to comment on the issue.

**Engineer Muhammad Masud Hassan**  
Dhaka

### What is crossfire?

The word "cross" means collision or coming in close contact. Here the two sides are likely to have equal chances. But in case of crossfire between RAB and terrorists, the situation is different. Only the terrorists are getting killed.

The dangers associated with the process are far too evident. So it must be stopped if we want to uphold the rule of law which "crossfire" cannot ensure.

**Tarun Joty Mondal**  
Khulna, University

### Nuclear power plant

Tata group intends to set up a gas-based power plant in our country. We are already generating 75% of electricity consuming gas. But the supply of gas will come to an end after a certain period of time. We are already in trouble with gas due to its shortage both in industrial and domestic sectors. In this situation if our government agrees to supply gas to Tata in heavy quantity at affordable price, the situation will deteriorate further.

To solve this problem a nuclear power plant can be set up in the country. We, therefore, request Tata group to install a nuclear power plant in Bangladesh.

**Helal, Mahtab, Younus**  
JN Shaha Rd. Lalbag,  
Dhaka

### "Bush Culture"

There is a thing called "Black Culture" which is now not in use because it hurts the feelings of

some people. But once upon a time, the Western World used to brand the culture and customs of the Africans (who were also referred to as BLACKS) as 'Black Culture'.

Well, now in the present world, Black Culture is no less superior than the culture of the White people. But I am thinking about a new culture which I would like to call "Bush Culture" which refers to the "culture of imposing war on some country on flimsy grounds for realising some superfluous goal." I named it after the American President, Mr Bush because he has created this culture by imposing a bloody war on Iraq on the flimsy ground that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. But now it is revealed that Iraq had never possessed any such weapons of mass destruction as was imagined by Mr. Bush. This war has not only killed (still killing) so many innocent ordinary Iraqis but American and other foreign soldiers and civilians as well.

Bush Culture had also left its negative impact on Afghanistan turning that beautiful land of friendly people into a place of chaos and confusion. Here President Bush's target was to arrest Osama Bin Laden at the cost of so many lives. But the question is where is Bin Laden? Why President Bush's expedition to Afghanistan and Iraq had failed to catch Laden? Don't these facts prove that what President Bush tried to convince the world was not actually based on transparent ground?

Meanwhile, we do not support any terrorist act by anybody on any ground whatsoever because Islam never endorses terrorism, rather it always opts for peace through keeping patience and showing tolerance. But President Bush's action in the name of containing terrorism has given birth to more terrorist activities.

It is a religious culture of the Muslims to keep beard and to wear certain Islamic dress. But it doesn't mean that people with beard and in Islamic attire are terrorists or fundamentalists. Due to the hazardous side-effects of the Bush Culture, many countries have started persecuting the orthodox Muslims.

If Bush Culture were a solution to terrorism, it would be okay. But the question remains can world peace be ensured through military invasion?

**Zahidul Haque**  
Chairman Department of Language  
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural  
University  
Dhaka

### Street beggars

Keeping in view the forthcoming SAARC summit to be held in Dhaka, the government has taken some measures to beautify the capital city by landscaping and gardening on both sides of the Airport Road and between road dividers, which is expected to give our metropolis a decent look. We must give thanks to the authorities, be it the City Corporation or the Ministry of Communication, for their efforts and aesthetic sense. In this connection I would like to draw the attention of the govt. to an irritant of our city life—beggars, old and young, male and female, are seen begging in almost every busy and important road crossing, exposing their physical deformities which definitely goes against our national pride and dignity.

I have every sympathy for the poor beggars who need to be rehabilitated, but they should not be allowed to blur the image of the nation. Before the SAARC summit the streets of Dhaka should be completely cleared of beggars and squatters through a special drive.

**Amit Bikram Tripura**  
Residential Model College  
Mohammadpur, Dhaka.

### US presidential election

The presidential debates of the

United States are over and John Kerry won all the three and we hope he will also win the election, become the next president and bring the changes that his country needs so badly.

All eyes are turned towards America, people all over the world are waiting in anticipation because the President of the United States holds the power to shape the destiny of other countries.

In the last election, though it was quite clear that Al Gore was the winner, for some mysterious

The message is simple: if you can't handle it, make way so others may try to improve the situation (it is not private business). The chief of the unwieldy team has to be flexible, but firm. No nonsense, and face the reality.

There is too much compromising attitude in political decision-making. No khatir (favour) to the near and dear ones (these dear ones are too costly in the long run!). Familiarity breeds compromise; this is due to lack of self-discipline. In Dhaka, no public servant is willing to suffer. It

The other side of the coin is: change over to honest 'CNG governance'. It means reduced systems losses, and less political noise and pollution. But all public offices must be fitted with 'monitoring meters' so that the public can watch the readings all the time. The citizens have become politically deaf with the very high noise level of our politics. The mighty opposition leads in this respect!

Interesting proposal: impose value added tax (VAT) on the use of microphones, as more so for use of the PA system at political meetings; the rate rising exponentially after every 15 minutes. The income would be huge! The freedom of speech is not being tampered with no restriction on the time-limit or contents (subject to constitutional boundaries). There is enough black money in circulation. The goal is to practise economy in life.

What is the pace of the public offices? It is presumed that it is at the pedal cycle rickshaw speed! And the latter is banned from the main roads in Dhaka! Is it not an anti-people move, when a survey indicated that 20 per cent of the mega city's residents travel by rickshaws, compared to 10pc by bus? Reported unofficial plying of about 400,000 rickshaws in Dhaka is a huge business by any standard, and it cannot be dismissed lightly by the elected government.

Outside the capital city, the speed of governance is at country boat speed (paddle and sail, no engine). In tune with tradition! Then where are the development efforts, specially in speeding up official transactions? One cynical message is coming through; You get busy with day work, while we indulge in vulgar politics! Too many political hajis (pilgrims) around.

If the CNG principle is not acceptable, there is an alternative: go for mass LPG movement, with mini cylinders in every village homestead. It is a big project.

**Abad**  
Dhaka

### A hostel in bad shape

A report about a female hostel published in the Prothom Alo drew our attention. The permanent regular female boarders do not open their mouths being afraid of losing their hostel seats. Even when they are sick, the boarders cannot complain about their sufferings. The college authorities should look into the matter.

**Rezaul Karim**  
Tarun Hall  
Ananda Mohan College

### Western propaganda

Mahathir (of Malaysia) is right (report in DS Oct 12), shun propaganda on the Western materialistic philosophies of life. We have been indoctrinated by this imperialism for centuries (examine the effects of 200 years of British Raj). Earlier he blasted the nincompoop OIC for its impotent stance on global affairs, and the merciless exploitation of Muslims and the oppressions resulting thereof. Where is the whiff of local, natural air-conditioning (native environment)?

Parroting local leaders may be compelled through public opinion to retire into oblivion. Fossils are inactive viruses, for show only. In Dhaka, the years 2004-5 are critical for governance. Change is better than no change. Change means adjusting to new/changing inputs. Hopes and aspirations are new and changing inputs. Lagging leaders are left behind. Forward leaders keep the marchers on their toes. We are sitting ugly, not pretty!

**Md Abad**  
Dhaka

## Bangladesh my love



Bangladesh is a country of immense potential. When Bangladesh begins its journey to development an international conspiracy is hatched to stop its progress. They start to call Bangladesh a non-functional state and the conspiracy does not end there. They allege that Bangladesh is a 'seat of terrorist camps'. My heart aches when political leaders and intellectuals of our country support the baseless charges.

We need to be a lot more patriotic to serve the country.

**Md Shahidul Islam**  
Reazbag, Taltola, Khilgaon, Dhaka

reason the supreme court declared G.W. Bush as president. Coming to power, Bush acted most unwisely and America lost the goodwill and respect it used to have across the world. Injustice never pays, Bush's bid to protect America has actually made it more unsafe because his unjust actions have instilled hatred in the minds of the victims.

We think the people of America are aware of these facts and will choose the man who will bring back the lost glory, and once again America will become the dreamland for everyone.

**Nur Jahan**  
Chittagong

### Inertia in the cabinet

Too many ministers in the cabinet, and too few changes in the portfolios (at irregular intervals, in public interest). Some ministers seem to lack maturity and experience to handle critical ministries. Some are sleeping over the open secret of corrupt practices.

means that the suffering is transferred to other innocent persons. Message to the public workers (from a voter and citizen): be mentally prepared to face the music! What has happened to the culture of impartiality?

**Alif**  
Dhaka.

### CNG culture

The governance in Dhaka resembles the caprices of the thousands of CNG autorickshaws plying in the metropolis, most of whom refuse to go by the fare meter, and decline to go to most destinations. It is the defiant philosophy cultured by the opposition parties (regardless of the name of the party).

Why the fare meters have been installed? Is our governance imitating the "CNG culture"? Too much gas (or gassing) around, and nothing solid out of it (unless foreign investors like the Tata group can show us how to run big enterprises!).

## Tata as a catalyst

Since political diplomacy has failed miserably in South Asia since the British gave up the Raj, perhaps mega business deals (like the friendly 'invasion' of Bangladesh by the mighty Tata group) might provide some clues to the light-headed political leaders on how to conduct political business in the region, specially with the tiny members of the doped Saarc.

There are some critics who are wondering whether, like the background initiative taken to resolve the disputes between Pakistan and India, the Tatas got the unofficial nod to say hello to Bangladesh as a gesture of goodwill. The fall-outs would be observed with keen interest by one and a half billion people in the subcontinent.

The core issue is to thaw the political cold wave sweeping across the subcontinent for half a century, after the British cleverly broke up British India, to leave enough radioactive debris to keep debatable issues alive for generations. Two generations are not enough to dilute 200 years of mental conditioning.

The British occupation of the subcontinent was a business conquest, thanks to the services offered and rendered by the East India Company. The big multinational investors are always looking for seamless business and trading borders.

Now the Tata group appears to have dismantled the psychological barrier in Dhaka with a big dangling offer, of not half or one billion dollars, but a mighty two billion dollars by one single investor.

The principle is simple: sustain the flow (current) when the going is good. We Dhakayyas know the effect of blocked canals

and khals in and around the metropolis Dhaka.

The second principle is: there are many categories of goods and services, moral, political, business, and cultural. Human nature is basically the same everywhere, under any sovereign flag, intuitively, regardless of tutorial polarities.

**A Mawaz**  
Dhaka

