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# Adopt FAR architecture



PHOTO: AFP

I strongly support the FAR concept proposed by an architect of Brac University (letter in DS Mar 15), for construction of high-rise buildings and other complexes in the cities and urban areas.

It is unfortunate that many greedy professionals succumb to the unscientific proposals from the clients; with the result that we are being swamped by concrete jungles in Dhaka metro and other cities and industrial and residential areas. We are developing vertically too fast!

The government is aware of the technical nuisance effect, but the concerned agencies are too powerless or too greedy to enforce proper monitoring and regulations (DCC, Rajuk, and the metro coordinating agencies). The cumulative effect is disastrous as we can already see in Dhaka. The traffic flow around such huge buildings are not coordinated properly during the planning, approval, and implementation stages.

Not that we do not have the awareness or expertise; but the professional ethics cultivated currently is poor, as such negative compromises are not in public interest in the long run.

Residential buildings more than three

floors high (walk up) may be discouraged for a decade (foundation for higher floors may be allowed in the right zones), as the power supply problem persists (lifts and air-conditioning), and the present roads are too narrow to handle the additional traffic around. Water supply is another big problem. [Now we cannot get running water in our rented flat in a residential area in Dhaka, as we used to get a few years back.]

The economy is galloping in the higher income bracket group; plus money laundering in various forms has become big business, with many offshoots, visible to the urban residents. The GDP may be rising, but not proportionately, as the gap between the top and the bottom levels of the society is too disparaging. The rich are getting richer, although development in the rural areas is not invisible. The base can be broadened with more emphasis on rural development strategies. This is not being carried out in modular format.

The government has to urgently single out the unsociable effects of corrupt practices, and launch a project to counteract the same.

**Alfa Ahmed**  
Dhaka

## They are not angels

Phrases and idioms will not help us. A foreign country will not solve our problems. Hating crime and pleading for the criminals are not the same thing. I wish some people could understand this plain truth. Our problem is we talk too much and don't work. When outlaws kill and chop innocent civilians, we read newspapers and say, "The country has gone astray, what the hell is the government doing?" And when the government deploys law enforcers to fight the terrorists, we say,"

as I understand, is that we should not be very sensitive about the activities of the foreign companies. The point is not clear to me. Shouldn't we protect our interests?  
**Md Yousuf Hassan**  
23, Goipibagh 1st lane,  
Dhaka 3

## Zeena Syed's letter

I have been collecting letters to the editor on English medium education/schools for quite some time and your recent letter has added to my stock. For someone

uneducated, to whom the question of English does not arise in their whole lifetime. English has given you a passport to be a global competitor; the same English has been a big barrier in the life of so many people in the country in getting just a job for living. I know a person who took the IELTS 7 or 8 times but couldn't cross the hurdle because the score was not good enough. Of course the person was from Bangla medium, like me.

But I don't understand one thing in your letter. You complained that 'youth' was 'hindered' by 'close-

were shocked, devastated listening the news. Jinat Rokshana is our only younger sister. I was in Bangladesh in February and celebrated Sadman's 11th birthday together. I spoke to Kabir and Jinat just a few days ago. When I remember all these I cannot control my emotions. According to your news, it seems that a tree trunk fell on their three-wheeler. I understand that the trunk must be a big one and according to my guess for some reasons the trunk was half detached from the main body of the tree, otherwise in such a non-windy weather it could not have crashed down. Now my point is who is to blame for this tragic incident? We understand that the City Corporation is supposed to maintain those trees seasonally and I am pretty sure they have paid employees to take care of those trees all over Dhaka. How come such a big trunk (presuming it was detached) went un-noticed?

Jinat has five brothers—all of them are well educated, I am sure when her condition will improve she will ask a lot of questions to herself and will try to find out responsible persons/authorities for her irreversible fate. We are also determined to help her in order to give her mental peace. We also need your help to make people aware about their responsibilities.

I am sure newspapers can play a vital role in making people/authorities aware about their responsibilities and can save lot of lives lost due to negligence of responsible persons/organisations.

**Dr. Mahbub Reza**  
Toronto, Canada

## An appeal to Reza Kibria

The tragic death of your father Mr. SAMS Kibria was not merely your family bereavement but a national sorrow and shame. It was shocking that a national leader like Mr. Kibria could be eliminated so easily by criminals with possible machination by some political godfathers. You have our deepest sympathy. We admire the way a crusade has been launched by your family and friends against all terrorism. You are, I am sure, aware that terrorism has many facets.

## Who is responsible for these deaths?

We thank you and your newspaper for publishing the news "Father, son die in freak accident" in the March 20 issue. Unfortunately, the victims are my family members. We



PHOTO: STAR

## How effective is our JS?

In any country the parliament i.e. the legislative authority plays a pivotal role in determining people's fate. But in Bangladesh the situation is different.

Are our lawmakers making laws for our people or are they using JS as a 'battlefield' only? Each time following election the losers term it flawed The people who cast their votes with high expectations for electing MPs are being deceived, as the parties attach no importance to their problems.

**Moinul Alam**  
Ramna, Dhaka

Human rights are being violated, stop Rab, they are killing people."

We should remember that killing one terrorist is equal to saving hundreds of innocent lives. And if I talk about the corrupt Rab member who has been captured recently for taking bribe, I will say that human beings are not angels. There are temptations everywhere. You can't expect good service from anyone without any deviation. One person might be corrupt, it does not necessarily mean that each Rab member takes bribe! Rab members as well as the police force need better salary that might keep them away from corruption.

**Cantara Wali Ruhi**  
Dhaka

## Justice

Justice is that which preserves the interest of the mightier. So, Syria has to withdraw its troops from Lebanon. It is only a half-measure to dispatch Syrian troops into border areas and the rest will be done if it (Syria) removes all its agents from Beirut.

But, we must not expect the same result in the case of America. As the US is the great peace and democracy keeper (!) of the world, so it can employ troops anywhere, can commit genocide, can replace an elected government etc. We must realise that the United States of America is the most power-blind, bloodthirsty nation and "Justice" is the thing which protects its interests.

**Rizwan-ul Huq**  
on-email

## Foreign investment, at what cost?

March 18 evening, Bangla news on TV: State minister for energy Mr. AKM Mosharrar Hossain appeared visibly much annoyed with people who are expressing their concern over the recent Tangratilla accident, its environmental impact and fallout. This might just have been an accident, but I am sure its real cause will never be unearthed.

I observed with astonishment that the Honorable Minister very openly and unconditionally advocated the case for attracting FDI. What he really meant, as far



PHOTO: AFP

There is a tendency to stigmatise 'Islam' as the religion of fundamentalists and extremists, especially by the western press. Standing at this juncture, my letter will very briefly draw a demarcation line between fundamentalism and extremism and its so-called fillip-providing components in 'Islam'. The letter from Ms. Cantara Wali published in the DS on 16 March hinted at this heated debate. Fundamentalists are those who are stuck to originality. Their rigid stand on originality termed as fundamentalism is the father of nationalism, I believe.

But extremism is diametrically opposite to fundamentalism. It is the

display of violent spurt of power to subjugate others. Sometimes I become flabbergasted why religion especially Islam is labeled with the scar of extremism. Is there any living religion in the world which supports extremism? The answer is in every possible way negative.

Nowadays Islam is misrepresented and misinterpreted. It is a matter of great concern. Everyone is dogmatic and fundamentalist when it comes to his own roots. If we delve deep into this matter we will find that the essence of this fundamentalism is nationalism.

Let's not mix up religious faith with the political agenda of the fanatics.

**ABM Shafiqul Islam**  
Dept. of English  
Jahangirnagar University.

## Caretaker government

Law Minister Barrister Moudoud Ahmed has ruled out the possibility of any amendment to the system of caretaker government. The opposition Awami League and some other political parties have threatened to boycott the general election under the existing system of caretaker government.

"The opposition is contemplating

## A rough ride

It took me a week to get my thoughts in place and write about my recent experience at the amusement park in Ashulia.

Last Friday, we went to Fantasy Kingdom for a family picnic. The greenery of the Heritage Park and the fresh air was everything that we had been looking forward to for weeks. I spent the better part of the day relaxing in the nice shade and marveling the beautiful replicas of Shatgombuj Masjid, Ahsan Manzil etc.

Just as we were leaving for the day, I was coaxed into getting onboard the ride called "Spider Ride". The ride started off at an outrageous pace. The "safety" handlebars did not have a good grip, and in a couple of seconds we were being flung and banged about in all directions. Most importantly, the way the ride is structured in movement and duration is surely dangerous for anyone. In fact, I watched a middle aged man actually crawling out of the ride clutching his chest.

I had fared no better. I started to throw up and sought medical help. But, there was no first aid station or a medical personnel insight.

I want to know if such rides are certified to be safe for an amusement park (where you have children and aged people alike)? And why aren't there any first aid stations? I also feel that the warning sign board should be placed clearly, as it is done so at the amusement parks all over the world.

I hope the readers take heed of this next time they visit the amusement parks. More importantly, I hope the park authorities take the appropriate action based on this letter rather than wait for an accident before taking notice.

**Malika, Gulshan, Dhaka**

# Our flag

The flag of Bangladesh was designed by painter Quamrul Hasan. He worked for a few months in making this flag of an Independent Bangladesh, which first had a golden Bangladeshi map on a red circle with a green background. The green colour was chosen as the symbol of the vitality, youthfulness and the beautiful green landscape of our homeland. The red circle symbolises the blood of the people killed by Pakistanis on this soil since 1947. The golden Bengal was represented by the golden Bangladeshi map.

ASM Abdur Rab, the vice-president of the students union of Dhaka University, hoisted the flag for the first time on March 3, 1971. He arranged an emergency meeting at Madhu's Canteen at midnight, between March 2 to 3, on the university campus. In the meeting it was decided that they (BCL) had no alternative choice but to hoist the flag. Later, at



PHOTO: AFP

Ramna Race Course (now Suhrawardy Uddayan), the historic flag was again raised by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The flag of Bangladesh was first hoisted at the UN in September 1974 and later appeared in UN's stamp series "Flags of the member states".

We should know the history of our flag.

**Tahsin Hyder**  
Maple Leaf International School  
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

distribute relief during natural calamities like flood, cyclone, earthquake etc. To enable the armed forces to perform these responsibilities, they are to remain extremely professional, which is possible through regular exercise, training etc.

I think for the sake of efficiency of the armed forces they should not be engaged in activities (like serving other organisations on deputation) which have nothing to do with the work for which they are recruited and trained. And lastly, why shouldn't the defence budget be transparent and placed in the Jatiya Sangsad?

**Ahmed Shah**  
Dhamondi, Dhaka

## Reform BTTB

The recent demonstration representing lakhs of mobile telephone users (a hot business) spotlights one single malaise in the regime: the monopolistic hold of the BTTB, who are cashing on a familiar situation—take advantage of a market when the demand far exceeds the supply of a commodity or service, in this case cell telephones.

No regime could control the head-in-the-sand attitude of BTTB, which always go slow in providing telephone services to this fast developing society. It is holding on to outdated fixed-line telephone system, and the service standard is lousy, to say the least. The vested groups inside are powerfully backed by hidden godfathers.

Example; the fake premature opening of the BTTB mobile telephone service; while secret negotiations are believed to be going on through back doors for 'graft-toll'.

The latest news is that an US company (in joint collaboration) has started a WLL fixed telephone service outside Dhaka. This is a new trend, which deserves close attention. WLL might be suitable for outlying rural areas. Give each

farmer a telephone (use mini solar power kits for self-installation).

The high rates of the private mobile companies cannot be reduced so long as they have to pass through the BTTB network for additional services to the other districts and internationally. The situation would ease after the opening of the submarine cable service. Ignoring this route was a colossal blunder of the earlier regimes.

Similar monopoly existed in PDB; and now the situation has slightly improved in reduction of the systems losses. The delays in approval of electric supply development projects come from the suspected unholy negotiations preceding such big projects. The government is aware of it, as the regime cancelled several projects approved by the preceding regime. Begum Khaleda Zia's government has to take some drastic actions (referring to her soothing closing speech at the JS a few days ago). She presented one side of the dirty coin.

**M Abdali, Dhaka**

## Rab's performance

It is after a long spell, I guess after the unfortunate incident of his being seriously wounded, that the eminent economist Abu Abdullah has written an article. The article was published in The Daily Star of the 14" instant under the caption 'One and a half cheers to Rab'. I agree with him in giving cheers to the law-enforcing agency Rab, though our cheers may be short of full three cheers. For the first time in our country, police in the garb of Rab have been more agile and efficient than the criminals. The agency has also acted irrespective of political moorings of the criminals and in doing so it appears not have been interfered with by the government. As regards the allegations of non-transparency in the operations of Rab, the author has rightly remarked as follows: "To let known criminals roam free from a nice regard for their right to life and