

Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

# Roots of CORRUPTION

The article by RH Khandker coincided with the magazine leader on the way both advertisers and children can manipulate parents in order to acquire things that are a passing fashion/passion. Thus they learn a pattern of behaviour and attitude of 'getting away with it', which, as Mr Khandker pointed out, is a key part of corruption.

Being the Principal of a school, I have to take the matter of the mutual respect of parents, teachers and pupils very seriously - and the system of discipline that can support it. There are two temptations that both school and home can fall into - one is to have a system of discipline so harsh (using beating and shouting, withering sarcasm and repeatedly telling the child that it is 'weak', morally and/or academically) that the spirit of the child is broken. The other is to avoid punishment altogether and deal with every offence with a shrug and a sweet smile. This last can be because some children, in the eyes of their parents, can do no wrong so that anything that goes wrong is considered the school's fault and any attempt at disciplining is too harsh. (The same parents sometimes come wailing to the school, later, because they have lost control of it and wonder what they have done wrong!) But when parents have removed pupils from your school because you have taken their offences seriously, it can make you very nervous!

I do believe there is a sensible middle way - 'training the will without breaking the spirit' - but, in this culture, I have found that it is extremely hard work. Firstly, one has to create an atmosphere in which making mistakes is a normal part of learning and living with others. Mistakes are not to be mocked or over-reacted to, especially with physical or verbal abuse. Secondly, the mistake has to be owned up to and discussed calmly for ways in which repetition can be avoided. Thirdly, something has to happen! The child must NOT 'get away with it'! Maybe one demands a sincere apology or the replacement of something broken or a report to the parents or carrying out of some detention.

Fourthly, after that, the matter is OVER. No more re-iterations or re-iterations about the enormity of the offence although, in school, records are quietly kept. To me, this is simply trying to make the principle of forgiveness and mercy 'work' and it is most strange to me that, with so much that is said in all good religions about these things, the children, and some parents, need so much help to make it work in practice. This tends to be a merciless culture!

**A School Principal, One-mail**

dilapidated and in ruins, due to lack of fund and interest of the authorities concerned).

As long as the authorities and organisers of tourist attractions in Bangladesh do not understand that tourism is not only a matter of earning (easy) money, but also a matter of service and politeness it will stay a far, far cry before the tourist sector will develop and foreign tourists will visit Bangladesh, without any doubt one of the most beautiful countries in the world!

**Willy Legendre**  
Baharchara, Cox's Bazar

## SEC's new plan

The country's capital market watchdog (SEC) is planning to introduce a new method of IPO floatation called 'book building' procedure replacing the existing lottery method. Under the proposed 'book building' method, underwriters would buy all the shares to be floated by business enterprises into the stock markets through a competitive bidding procedure. Underwriters would then choose some seller groups or brokers to put up those shares for sale to the retail investors. The share issuing companies will get their share prices from underwriters who will be the highest bidder in the bidding procedure. Under this system, no lottery will be held to allot shares among the general investors. This is a wrong decision by SEC and it will drive away huge general investors from the capital market. This sheer injustice to the small investors will hamper capital market's growth severely by serving the interest of some particular market players and 'issuing companies' but not the general investors'. SEC claims that the new system will ensure quality issues. This is not true. If SEC wants to woo quality issues, they can do it by not approving the IPO proposals of weak and doubtful companies.

So SEC should not introduce such a new system that would permanently drop out general investors from the capital market making the market fully 'elite class' oriented. If the existing IPO floatation method continues, chances are high that these small and new investors will, someday, come into secondary market. But the proposed new method is likely to destroy the recently developed primary market. We hope SEC will not only consider the interest of the issuing companies and 'elite class' investors but also the general investors'. SEC should consider the existing system of IPO floatation as the best one and should continue it for the greater interest of the general investors.

**Shahin Ahmed Chowdhury**  
Department of Marketing, DU

## Politics in the eyes of citizens

As a non-political citizen my views matter little to politicians and political parties. Our politicians read newspapers for three main reasons. First, if they find any item that concerns them positively, they are delighted. They think again to repeat the act so that similar news reappears. Second, they read news that goes against their opponents (this is also positive), say for instance, price hike, any logical or illogical speech/statement or news that brings bad name to the country. They start mulling over the same to add fuel to fire. They blame the party in power, conveniently overlooking their role (past or future) and they read lucrative business news, which is connected, with their business. (Most of them are wealthy business

magnets; anything concerning business concerns them). They are too busy to read readers' column. So whatever 'briefing/summaries' are kept on their table, they just glance over it. These letters to the editors are sometimes significant and far-sighted. But these are like unheeded didactics. Politicians are hardly receptive or responsive to readers' opinions. But I venture to express myself, whether you agree or not; heed it or not.

In 2001, many readers made enlightened propositions on election results to both the major parties but to no effect. Politicians repeated their rhetorical utterances. So, as a reader, when I write something, I am aware that the readers would read or contemplate like me, though without any influence on politicians or any objective. These (readers) writers are self-confident, self-conscious loyalists, conscientious countrymen, who honestly think about social and human predicaments and contribute for no return. Unlike politicians they are neither hyperbolic nor hypocritical.

Some of the assessments are summarised below. After the massive election defeat of the Awami League; readers viewed the following grounds for the defeat:

Firstly, deteriorating law and order all over the country and the role of some Awami leaders (including Hazari), which adversely affected the party in power's image. Secondly, corruption and nepotism. Whatever the AL says today, they did not show enough toughness against the malades. Their Special Act fell flat due to lack of effective execution. The AL openly displayed disrespect against the Judiciary by organising processions with sticks, led by some of the cabinet ministers. Fifthly, the AL miserably failed to persuade the opposition to come back to the parliament. No dialogues were initiated to bridge the gap between the government and the opposition, when the BNP continuously disrupted public life by calling hartals. Newspapers printed photographs of MPs with guns, openly creating chaos in the Secretariat building and

The training period of our "politicians" never end even after more than one generation. The very definitions of 'politics' and 'politicians' have been warped.

Truth is- parliamentary form(s) of governance does not work in poor societies. Presidents and autocrats cling to power decade after decade in all countries & nations.

Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi were based in South Africa. A flower shines brighter while shinning alone.

Corrupt practices are simply explained: first strengthen one's economic base, before qualifying for (allegedly) serving one's fellowmen.

The poor and subjective minds cannot invent a new system of governance. Notice that in the Muslim states in the Middle East, a different type of "democracy" is practised (monarchy). Why? Time tested?

Be "noble" and be crushed, or be scheming, and keep the society schism.

Hypocrisy is entrenched today. The Bush doctrine is creating jungles of cannibalism.

Let there be peace till Dawn breaks.

**AA**  
Dhaka

## Savings of villagers

Eighty-five percent people in our country live in the villages. There is no public financial institution to collect savings of the villagers. So villagers cannot conveniently deposit their savings to any bank. The govt financial institutions like Sonali Bank, Agrani Bank, Janata Bank and Rupali Bank offered a reasonable rate of interest in the past. But now the situation is different.

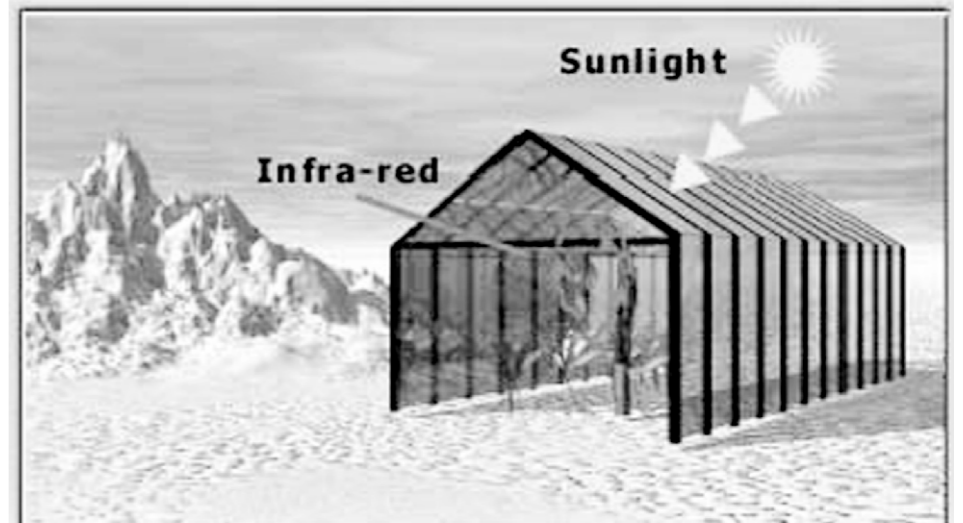
The government should look into the matter.

**Abul Kalam Md Shahin Miah**  
Nawabgonj, Dinajpur

## TI's suggestion

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina has declared that she has no objections to Transparency International's suggestion that she,

# SAVE THE WORLD



Sunlight enters the greenhouse through the angled glass panels. The plants absorb the sun's energy and emit infrared wavelengths to cool the greenhouse. This cycle continues to maintain the temperature. In summer, the temperature is warmer inside. In colder months, heating contributes to this cycle.

Once the subject matters of international politics were national politics, economy, diplomacy, defence etc. But nowadays the theme of politics has changed. It means something more. James N Rosenan said that mass population, drugs, AIDS, environmental degradation, economic crisis, crisis of pure water etc, would incite the future global politics. Yes, Rosenan is right these issues are coming up now in international politics more than ever before. The environment is now the number one issue.

The green movement is playing a vital role to protect the global environment. But the developed countries are not playing a positive role in this respect. They should come forward to save this world.

**Uma Das, Jahangirnagar University**

wealth and only participate in elections if their names are cleared of corruption charges/accusations. This would help erase the public perception that our leaders are corrupt.

As both have corruption charges hurled at each other, this is the right

Other than BADC, a good number of NGOs & seed producing companies are engaged in importing seeds from abroad or producing the same in the country but their quality is questionable as their target is to do business, rather than ensure quality. To the farmers, quality seeds mean BADC seeds. The present government is very much eager to promote the BADC activities. A few years back the officers & employees of BADC were in frustration thinking that the organisation would be abolished. Being afraid of their future, a good number of staff members left the organisation on golden handshake.

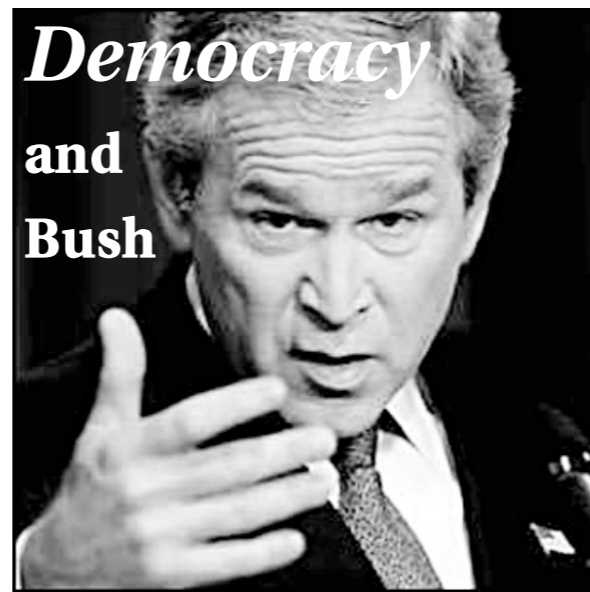
During the tenure of the present government nearly 100 agriculturists & 200 diploma agriculturists have been recruited at the BADC.

I appreciate the government move.

**Kbd. Md. Shafayet Hossain**  
BADC, Rangpur

## Missing Bangladesh

I miss Bangladesh more than words can say. I left Bangladesh on October 18, 1986 for a quality education and a better life in the US. Almost twenty years into this journey, I have attained two degrees, a B.S.E.E. and an M.B.A, have been working for the last fourteen years for the corporate America, have two residences, have a six digit income, two beautiful daughters and a good-hearted, generous, and conscientious wife. God has given me more than I could ask for, yet I don't feel the way I used to when I was in Bangladesh. I am sure my wife and children don't feel the same way either. I will make attempts to describe my feelings below:



"My fellow Americans' major operation in Iraq have ended. In the battle of Iraq, United States and our allies have prevailed," said President George W. Bush on May 1, 2003, standing among hundreds of American servicemen. Maybe, those men and women thought they had fought for a grand cause, a reason for which they will be remembered respectfully - saving democracy and fighting terrorism. Maybe they thought that a new era would begin, with joy and happiness, with peace and expectations. An era really began, but in a different manner, with violence and hatred.

Where is the sign of democracy in Iraq? Making life better, protecting people from danger and keeping peace are the noble goals democracy. If President Bush does not know how to secure the values of freedom and democracy, he must not talk about it.

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

taking out violent processions. These are some of the lapses of the AL government.

**Tajul Islam**  
Gulshan-1, Dhaka

## Governance

Governance of commissions, or governance of omissions? What is going on in Dhaka? We have not yet learned to rule ourselves, individually, collectively, and at the national levels.

as the opposition leader, declare her wealth but would only do so provided the prime minister does the same.

The Awami League itself is crying hoarse and blaming the present government for all corruption that made Bangladesh top the TI corruption index for the fifth time.

Both BNP and Awami League leaders, if they are serious about stamping out corruption, should go ahead with declaration of their

time to sort out who is corrupt before either of them, BNP or AL, goes to power, and starts corruption all over again or be accused thereof.

**Nizam Ahmad**  
Dhaka

## BADC seed wing

Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation is the only government organisation which is producing quality seeds to meet the demand of seeds of the farmers.

## Report card on ministers

I read with avid interest your Report Card on Ministers.

These reports are quite amusing but make me feel sorry for Bangladeshi people. These Ministers are doing a disservice to the electorate and the country. Most of them are not fit for political roles as many in politics in

Bangladesh confuse a hunger for power and celebrity status with national politics.

The purpose of politics is to serve and contribute to the well being of a nation. It is a vocation.

**Abdus Salam**  
Camden, London, UK

## Remembering a footballer

After a long time, I looked for the record book that I kept during the mid 1990's. In that book I wrote the results of all the matches of Dhaka Premier Division Football League from 1994 to 1996. The news of footballer Tutul's death forced me to find out the book.

He was a fine striker with a poor luck. He never played for Bangladesh because at that time Naqib, Mizan, & Mamun Joarder ruled the forward line of Bangladesh national team. For successive years in 1995 & 1996 he was the second highest scorer in the Dhaka Premier League with 9 & 12 goals. The most memorable match of his life was against Bangladesh Boys on December 14, 1996. In that match he scored five goals. It's a record that stood for over 10 years. He showed his extreme prowess by netting two goals each in a match against Abahani on September 7, 1996 & against Muktiyoddha on November 17, 1996. The match against Abahani ended in a creditable draw & they won the match against Muktiyoddha 2-1.

In 1995, he led the modest Bhola district team to lift the National Champions Trophy. After a long streak with mediocre teams he joined the giant Abahani but lady luck was so cruel to him that she ruled him out from the scene with a cruel injury. From then on he went into oblivion.

After a long time, I see a photo of him in newspapers. But this is a sad occasion for all of us. Tutul is no more.

**Solaiman Palash**  
One-mail

## Safari Park

On 31/10/05 my students (a group of 18 Bangladeshi youngsters) and I (a foreigner) went on a study tour to Dulahazra Safari Park (mentioned in your Star Holiday Eid Special of 30/10/05). However, we were flabbergasted to learn that the entrance fee for Bangladeshi people is only Tk 10, but that foreigners have to pay US Dollars 6 (or Tk 330 according to the person on the ticket counter). With a work experience of 10 years in Bangladesh, visiting many beautiful places in the country and meeting extremely nice people, I have never seen such an outrageous form of "apartheid". Furthermore, when I approached the staff near the gate of the Safari Park to enquire about the unreasonable discrepancy in entrance fee, and tried to convince them (in Bangla) that we were a large group of Bangladeshi students (!), travelling a long way to visit the Park, the staff behaved extremely rudely and barked in our direction that "yes, foreigners have to pay 6 dollars, take it or leave it". Out of solidarity with each other, we decided to turn back and went to visit the precious Buddhist temples in Ramu (most of them shamefully

# Shortage of natural gas

Your headline and front-page commentary of 14 Oct 2005 has very rightly highlighted the crisis created by shortage of natural gas in many sectors. From the statement of Mr. Mahamudur Rahman, Energy

Advisor to our government, it seems the crisis cannot be resolved before 2007. The year 2007 is far away and in this transit period what can we do in our backward linkage industries? This remains unanswered. The media should probe the matter.

We are one of the pioneers in setting up of backward linkage industries at Zarum, 2km east of Konabari BISIC industrial area. The principle benefits of linkage industries are value addition of more than 50% compared to the normal 25% value addition in the garment sector. Buyers are more interested in composite units for reduced lead-time in carrying out export orders. We now export at 30 days lead-time, as all production equipment are under one umbrella, be it knit or woven garments. With the recent quota dispute of EU with China, more buyers are enlarging their business volumes in Bangladesh and this is the peak time to create strong foundations in EC markets and prove that Bangladesh is not affected in the post MFA period.

Natural gas is the primary energy source to generate power, steam and compressed air to run machines and motors. We need to stress that REB power source is very unreliable with more than six hours load shedding every day and low voltage.

So, we buy natural gas from Titas Gas and pay gas bills of Tk 33 lakh per month. The designed pressure target at Gazipur is 150 psig or more but during these days the pressure drops to 60 psig or even less which is a serious problem for us.

Thanks to you and the Energy Adviser for highlighting the crisis that we are passing through.

**Eng. Md. Shafiqul Islam, One-mail**



When I lived in Bangladesh, I never felt I was cornered, because I was born as a member of the majority. As I came to my senses, I saw all brown people around me, who spoke the same language, wrote the same letters, and who behaved and thought almost the same way. So much blended I was with them that I did not even realise that we were all brown until I was in the US. I miss being the majority in Bangladesh. I miss the good food, I miss the friends and families I left behind, I also miss everything that I missed being in the US. Even though all my family members are US citizens now, in my head and heart, I am very much a Bangladeshi ---I feel like I am the product of Bhashani's self-less struggle, Bangabandhu's powerful Bajra Kantho, President Zia's constructive Khal Khonon, President Ershad's romantic poems, Begum Hasina and Khaleeda's women's right and upliftment. I am a mixture of time and political events. I miss it all.

In the US, we speak English with an accent and my daughters can say a few words in Bengali with an accent. They don't understand Rabindranath, Sharat Chandra, Nazrul and Mujtaba Ali, and we do not understand many slang words that they use. The culture gap, language gap and the generation gap all are distancing themselves from us, yet we all feel we are very much the minority here and that unites us as a family despite all the gaps I have mentioned. Being a minority has its rewards as well. You become more competitive to overcome the power of majority, you become more distinguished by working harder and smarter. Yet it is a pain to be a minority. You can live abroad for thirty plus years, but you may always face the question from a six-year old majority, "Where are you from?" This often makes you feel a stranger in a strange land.

One important note, despite all the differences our political leaders have, at the end of the day, they know they are all Bangladeshis. That's really important.

**Jami, New Jersey**

## Advertisements

There is a Film Censor Board, but which authority monitors the advertisements in the press, and TV media, and takes action against unsafe advertisements, which children might imitate, with the risk of injury?

I noticed an advertisement on BTV in which two children run to retrieve a floating umbrella stuck on a tree, with the mother watching anxiously. Both climb up the tree, and one child floats down to earth holding the open umbrella (parachuting).

The readers hardly see any press report on deterrent action on undesirable advertisements; (viz. jobs and studies abroad how to judge which are genuine?).

**A Mawaz**  
Dhaka