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# Taking care of people



We the citizens expect and hope that the non-political caretaker government will take care of us, establishing norms that will be permanent.

One such area is healthcare for the poor. The Dhaka Medical College Hospital is perhaps the most corrupt institution in Bangladesh! It is not run by the administration, but by the politically controlled employees union. What happens there is dictated by them, and the authorities duly accept it and overlook it all the time! Small wonder, the poor cannot afford to go there! Admission to the hospital, ambulance services, even carrying serious and elderly patients in stretchers; all have unofficial price tags attached. The axiom of this institution, the largest hospital in Bangladesh, is "Pay or perish" This issue has been raised in the print media many times, but unfortunately nothing has been done; and the CTG is also following the no-action programme here, the largest hospital in Bangladesh.

It is due to this ingrained corruption at DMCH that a large number of private hospitals and clinics have been commercially successful! Usually expert services in these private institutions are rendered by the employees of DMCH and other government hospitals. DMCH, a massive centre of nepotism and corruption, symbolises the state of public hospitals in the country.

The CTG must clean up the mess. The chief executives of these hospitals have no initiative in this direction. They live and work on the principle: "See no evil, Hear no evil", for this they practise-- "Take no initiative, and do no good" as that is bothersome!

When will the powers that be wake up?

**S.A.Mansoor**  
Gulshan, Dhaka

## Leaders, leave the people alone

We do not disagree with the rights of two of our former prime ministers: Sheikh Hasina has every right to return to her country and Khaleda Zia too has every right to decline to go abroad. But we do also have every right to tell them that we have heard enough, seen enough, and are sick and tired of them.

The two former heads of the government, excuse for the crude inference, have been 'beneficiaries' of two tragic incidents in our post-71 history involving their dear ones. Often they would invoke the two figures quite effectively, and the gullible mass would fall into an abysmal hollow. It is not that all they did was bad, but being identified as the mother of a son involved in extortion and siphoning off money, or in the case of the other being accused of accepting millions as bribe for awarding contracts, dwarfs whatever little image we are left with. It is now our turn to invoke those leaders and tell them straight in their faces that they are just not worthy of the names they are related to. Fullstop.

They should consider retirement from professional politics devoid of national interest, answer accusations, and come out clean. Please leave us alone!

**Nayem Jaffar**  
New York

## Eviction drive in Dhanmondi

As a long-term resident of Dhanmondi (since the 1950's), I am shocked by the recent rhetoric about Dhanmondi businesses and the drastic and over-the-top solutions being proposed by Rajuk.

Rajuk has, apparently at the behest of Dhanmondi Paribesh Unnayan Jote and perhaps other groups, issued eviction notices to so-called "illegal" commercial buildings in Dhanmondi. But not only within Dhanmondi, but also establishments on Satmasjid Road have been issued eviction notices.

To remove all commercial establishments within and on the outskirts of Dhanmondi in two months is nothing short of madness. Who could possibly think that such a drastic step could solve all the ills of the city? It will destroy businesses, make thousands of people jobless, and devastate the fledgling universities and schools, throwing tens of thousands of students and their parents into an educational nightmare. Not only that, it would also destroy Dhanmondi. Why do I say this? I dislike the traffic. I dislike the mushrooming of illegal establishments, especially within the perimeter of Dhanmondi. I dislike the hordes of people around the lake. I mourn the loss of the houses and gardens. But the authorities must surely realise that the sleepy residential character was destroyed years ago not by business, but by the building of large apartment blocks on top of the lovely houses and gardens. And so it must be, in a huge mega-city like Dhaka. When Dhanmondi was conceived, it was on the edge of the city. Now it is in the middle of a large metropolis. This is no longer a sleepy neighbourhood. It is an urban centre. All urban neighbourhoods, all over the world, must live with a mix of residences and commercial institutions. And Dhanmondi residents deserve nearby amenities.

I will proudly confess: I like the businesses. I like the fact that kids can go to school nearby, and don't have to commute to far-flung places like Uttara. I LIKE the bookstores and coffee shops and restaurants. I LIKE the shopping malls. I LIKE the fact that I have nearby hospitals of some quality where I can go in an emergency. Anyone who has ever seen an ambulance stuck in cross-town traffic will tell you the same.

These are called services and amenities, and they are as necessary to the vibrancy and livability of a city as the houses themselves.

I saw the press conference by Jote and I asked myself: Who are they really speaking for? For Dhanmondi residents? Or do they wish to go back to the 1970's, when

only 1- or 2-storied houses existed, where one had to walk far to get a single rickshaw, where the airport was at Teigaon, and the population of Dhaka was one million? Those days are long gone. It's time to wake up and realize that, for better or for worse, we live in a metropolis. I'm not saying we shouldn't evict the egregious offenders, or bring sanity to the zoning and approval processes, or strive to make traffic better. But all urban neighbourhoods must zone smartly, allowing for access to services and amenities.

Anyone who believes that a massive eviction drive is in any way smart urban planning surely does not understand the necessities of a vibrant urban neighbourhood.

**J.Ahmed**  
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

## Eve teasing

Innocent girls are the worst victims of teasing, almost everywhere in the country.

The law enforcers should address the issue and take necessary steps to stop this extremely uncivil behaviour.

**Nur Afzar**  
Dhaka

## Congratulations, Dr. Horta

I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate Dr. Horta on his becoming the president of East Timor. Also, I would like to congratulate the people of East Timor for their decision in favour of Dr. Horta at this critical juncture of the country's history.

I came to know Jose for the first time when we were flying from Australia's Darwin to East Timor on the same UN hired C-130 aircraft. It was one of the days in the first week of December 1999. There were, among others, a good number of Bangladeshis - both civilian and military personnel - travelling with us. All of them were heading towards their respective duty stations in East Timor for the first time, in almost all cases.

I came to know more about Jose when I started working for his organisation - Timor Aid, the country's largest NGO in the post liberation period. At that time, he was, among other things, the chief patron of Timor Aid and I was working as the organisation's Baucau representative. During my entire stay in East Timor, I have had several opportunities to observe Jose as an individual, and as a leader, as well as, manager - occupying, for example, a number of important national positions. It may be mentioned here, my learning curve concerning Horta related matters started growing at a faster rate when I came to capital Dili with an international assignment. Dr. Horta was then holding the position of cabinet member responsible for the country's foreign affairs under the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET).

I found Jose to be a visionary; a strategic thinker, as well as decision-maker; a highly result-oriented person; a tactful diplomat; a reliable guide in crisis; a man of reason and mission; a good negotiator; and an effective, as well as efficient leader, among other things.

Given the present day status of democracy, development and governance in East Timor, it now appears the country is yet to cross its transitional phase in many respects, relative to time, space and other variables, though. The country is small but resourceful. The management of the country's internal security, politics and resources has not yet been able to make a significant contribution to the country's per capita human development. Poverty is still at the chronic stage. Delivery of public services is yet to become competitive, more equitable, and cost effective. It should be noted here, a continually unstable East Timor could inter alia facilitate a quick transformation of the country into a full-fledged safe haven for terrorists. Further, East Timor has a vital role to play in say, the region's peace and stability.

In light of the above and other relevant factors, it now appears Dr. Horta, as the president of East Timor, will have a hard time in the days ahead. It is expected that people of East Timor, friends, neighbours and well-wishers will assist Dr. Horta and his team in the effort towards meeting the challenges.

**Dr. M. S. Haq**  
One-mail

## Admission forgery

The total number of fake students in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the DU is reported to be 76 (As of May 05, 2007). This is enough for tarnishing the image of the university.

The DU authorities should address the issue with a view to setting things right.

**Saif Tinku**  
One-mail

## Rebuilding demolished structures

The reinstatement of the unlawful structures, which were dismantled only a few days ago, is going on in almost full swing at Khulna city. The random reinstatement of the demolished structures is a new source of worry. Those shanty huts are being erected with the help of some dishonest public servants, under the aegis of the same political touts and intermediaries, with more vigour and intensity. It seems the govt. is now indecisive about the issue.

The government has to deal firmly with the issue of land grabbing and illegal occupation.

**Aneeka Rahman**  
Khulna

## Power issue

As I began writing this letter, suddenly the electricity went off, for the fourth time this evening!

Our first point is that we want to thank and congratulate the Adviser for Energy, Mr. Tapan Chowdhury, for being honest and frank while talking to journalists a few days back. No other Energy Adviser so far, as far as we can remember, has done this till now. According to a report published in your newspaper on May 19, the Adviser said the country's only future option for alternative energy will be coal as the existing gas reserves are likely to be depleted by 2011 or 2012."

Many of our countrymen, particularly leaders of political and social organisations, often oppose use of both gas and coal for productive purposes including producing power, but never say how else we can solve our power shortage problems. We, therefore, have two particular questions for these leaders. If we do not exploit our resources to help the nation move forward then what should we do with them? Secondly, do they want that we import power from India?

We would request the government to use our gas and coal resources for solving the power problem, but to do so wisely.

**Masud Ahmed**  
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

## Prime residential areas

With the deteriorating law and order situation in the country, the interim caretaker government should immediately take strict measures, especially in the prime residential area of Gulshan. Similar measures should also be taken in Baridhara, Banani and Dhanmondi areas. These areas should have security posts including vigilance teams and closed circuit cameras to ensure the security of residents.

All residents must have IDs and stickers in their cars. Traffic movement in and out of these areas, especially Gulshan and Baridhara,

should be strictly monitored in view of increasing terrorist activities.

**Kismat Akbar**  
Gulshan, Dhaka

## People ready to wait

We have found BNP leader Hannan Shah being very critical about the caretaker government. He too was in a great hurry to hold the election! He should have condemned the massive corruption, including stealing of relief goods by his party leaders. Why are the politicians so keen to hold a quick election?

The politicians should try to get some other job to earn their bread. The people are ready to wait for a free and fair election to be able to elect politicians with honesty, ability and sincerity.

**Dr. Manann Mridha**  
Stockholm, Sweden

## Grave risk

The big round-about on the Airport Highway, opposite the Terminal Building of ZIA, needs to be signal-controlled. Thousands of people and workers cross the highway every day, which is very risky. The overhead bridge is located at a distance that primarily caters to the need of the Railway Station and not at all meant for the large number of pedestrians coming in/out of the airport. The drivers on the road have no respect for the passersby and many lives have already been lost due to reckless and dangerous driving. The drivers at times even ignore the hand signals of the traffic police.

Either a subway or another overhead bridge can be built to save human lives. But before any such step is taken, the roundabout must be equipped with electronic signal posts.

**A.B. Mohammed Zakaria**  
East Sheurapara  
Mirpur, Dhaka

## 27th BCS: Do justice

Nowadays much is being said about the 27th BCS-- whether it should be cancelled or not. Those candidates, who have been successful, are strongly advocating that the said BCS results should not be cancelled, presenting various arguments. But as a victim my opinion is different. I was a BCS examinee for the 24th, 25th, 26th and 27th BCS. I passed in the written test and sat for viva voce in the 24th, 25th 26th BCS. I had a strong will that I could cross the hurdle. But I was not successful. As I failed, there was a last chance for me and I appeared at the 27th BCS. But I met some candidates saying that they got 90 to 100 objective questions (before the exams were held). My heart was broken.

The news of question paper leakage was widespread. Almost all the newspapers published the news. But the then government and the authorities turned a deaf ear to the news. And like other innocent candidates I didn't succeed.

We hope the new PSC chairman will look into the matter. Please do justice to us.

**Md. Abdur Rahman**  
Jhenaidah



# Bush and veto

The use of veto by President Bush to scuttle the Iraq pullout bill cannot be viewed as illegal or wrong, because he has only used his "legitimate" right bestowed on the president in the US Constitution. (However, the action of the Congress would strengthen the vague ideas of neo-cons to pursue the invasion policy until the entire energy-rich Middle East is brought under the control of the Pentagon).

The same way, if the Democrats move a resolution to restrain Bush from embarking on another misadventure, targeting Iran, that also is bound to face the same fate in the Congress. Bush thus has won the battle in the US, but not in Iraq and Afghanistan where destruction and genocide go on and on.

If the democrats really believe the troops have to be pulled out of Iraq (as well as Afghanistan) and that the powers of President deny the people's deputies to fulfill the ambitions of the Americans, they should come forward to repeal the same veto law of the US.

Similarly, the Americans would serve the world cause for peace and prosperity better by realising that veto is a dangerous tool being used even by the UNSC-5 members only to advance the individual interests of member-states and, therefore, the veto by the UNSC members should be withdrawn for the sake of a just, peaceful world.

Otherwise, it would appear that the Democrats are just playing out a drama, enacted in connivance with the Republicans to advance the US interests in the energy-rich Middle East.

The larger world is at a loss as to find out from the USA if veto power and invasions go against democratic values President Bush and the neo-cons talk about all the time, or they are part of democracy.

**Dr. Abdul Ruff Colachal**  
JNU, New Delhi

## HSC English question paper

I'm an HSC examinee. Our exams started on 10th May, 2007. The 1st exam was English 1st Paper. The most worrying thing for us was the question no 12 which was "Rearrange the jumbled paragraph in correct order." Most of the examinees answered the first two sentences in correct order. Some lines were missing that created confusion among us about the actual information. As a result, most of us answered it in different sequences.

I appeal to the education authorities to look into it and do justice to the examinees.

**Sal Saad Al Deen Taher**  
One-mail

## US Senators' letter

It is amazing that 13 US Senators sent a letter to the Chief Adviser to the government of Bangladesh. One of them is a defeated Presidential candidate; another is

prospective Presidential candidate. I am surprised to see that so many very important US Senators took it so seriously! They talked about a Road Map. Well, four years have elapsed but their government could not yet set a Road Map for the withdrawal of US forces from Iraq. Whereas, they asked for a Road Map from our government which is, virtually, swimming in the ocean of problems. Senators, please be sympathetic!

I can assure you we have the best people running our government. They will do the right thing at the right moment. It would be more beneficial for the US and the world if the Senators put their efforts to pressurize US President Gorge W. Bush to set a Road Map for setting things right in Iraq. Please do not take advantage of our weaknesses!

The Senators perhaps got a wrong impression about Bangladesh. It is very unfortunate!

**Mohammed Didarul Alam**  
**Bir Pratik**  
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

# University education: then and now

My attention was drawn to a news item on a roundtable of young academics organised by The Daily Star. Indeed, this was a very timely effort to reinvigorate our educational system and clean up the environment in higher education. Education is one of the prime catalysts for success in the modern world and the most coveted 'commodity'. It is thus high time

that we revolutionize education to create great professionals.

Prior to 1971, that is in the pre-independence days, Dhaka University used to be known as the Oxford of the East. However, During the rule of Ayub Khan and his Governor late Monem Khan the situation in the educational institutions and in particular Dhaka University

deteriorated culminating in the continuous nosedive since the independence. I had the good fortune of being a student of Dhaka University in the mid 1950's and have seen the educational environment, relations between the teachers and the students and last but not the least the relations amongst the students. We saw the leaderships of different organisations. Students' halls were in the hands of the top students by virtue of their being so. So a comparison of that time with that of the present day situation will simply shudder one. So instead of moving forward, the situation in each and every aspect has not only deteriorated but is still going downward.

A perusal of the present day environment of the educational arena, quality and dedication of the teachers and the activities of the students at all levels and the facilities available in the institutions at any level presents a

very dismal picture. Starting gaps exist between the quality of education that is promised and what is eventually delivered to the students!

Many of our renowned educationists are seen quite often in different forums highlighting different problems and suggesting the remedies of these problems. But I am yet to see any sustained efforts in this most vital sector as yet by these educationists.

We need relentless efforts to restore order in this sector as this is the most vital sector. Besides, it is felt that if appropriate education at all levels is imparted, then many of the ills that the nation is afflicted with will be removed. So, let these educationists, who are so vocal on other issues, make appropriate efforts in this sector to restore DU's earlier name and fame for the well being of the nation.

**Brig. Gen. A.H.M. Abdul Momen (Retd.)**  
New DOHS, Dhaka

# Controlling noise pollution

I would like to express my gratitude to all concerned who took the initiative to ban honking, first from the Shabbagh intersection to Sonargaon Hotel as a test case, then up to the Shaheed Jahangir Gate and now from all roads of the Dhaka city where only motorised vehicles ply. I salute you all for taking such a courageous step for which Sunder Jiban and its allies have been working for the last eight years since it was born in 1999. Sunder Jiban is the first organisation which brought the issue as a public nuisance through a seminar on 18 September 1999.

Also, I must acknowledge the contribution of the Bangladesh Paribesh Andolan (BAPA), the Noise Pollution Control Coordination Committee and the Society for Assistance to Hearing Impaired Children.

However, the efforts that the government has made so far are not enough to control noise pollution. Still there is a lot to do. First of all, the government should circulate the Noise Pollution Bye-Laws 2006 along with necessary instructions for its implementation to all implementing agencies throughout the country, including the lowest tier of the local government--the Union Parishad. Appropriate training of the drivers before they receive their valid licence must be ensured. All educational institutions, hospitals and other organisations within the purview of a silent zone should be aware of their duties in this respect. All NGOs should come forward to create mass awareness to control noise pollution. Finally, the Department of Environment and the law-enforcing agencies should continue their drive until the pollution comes down to a tolerable limit.

I hope the government will be able to control noise pollution significantly, implementing the Noise Pollution Bye-Laws 2006 all over the country.

**Md. Sirajul Islam Molla**  
Member-Secretary  
Air and Noise Pollution Control Programme, BAPA

