



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.



Water logging in Dhaka

I was born in Dhaka and although I have been living abroad for the past 12 years, I still consider Dhaka as my city, the place of my birth. And it is saddening to learn about the problems that beset my favorite place.

Radcliffe, during the partition of Bengal, said that this (former East Pakistan) would be the worst rural slum in the history of mankind. I know we have fared better than that. The high-rise buildings of Dhaka are a marked testimony!

Since the independence of the country, how badly the politicians have behaved! How they disregarded the welfare of the land and people in order to amass their own fortune.

Meanwhile, the unscrupulous land grabbers and builders got the nod from the corrupt people in power to destroy the natural landscape and drainage system in the name of development.

Not that I mean to compare, nor am I a structural engineer, but here in Orlando, Florida (a rapidly growing city) I can see how development occurs. After preparing the land, drainage of the land is ensured first with placing concrete pipes under-

ground before making roads or burying the cables or anything else. When the buildings come up, the infrastructure is already there. We get torrential downpour here, sometimes even flash flood follows, but water recedes in 15 minutes in worst cases in the neighbourhoods. Now that is America. I know they have the resources. And the know-how too.

Is it so hard to learn? Why it is that the rich and powerful cannot think beyond their petty profit.

I left Dhaka long ago. And I am sorry to learn about the state of the city. Lots of development has taken place in the meantime. But it is all meaningless if the development of infrastructure is ignored in the process.

If they don't have the intelligence to tame and befriend the environment, sooner or later they will have to pay for it. Ordinary people will be the worst sufferers. I only feel bad that some honest, decent fellows have to suffer along.

Dewan Jaglul
Orlando, FL

government and let the whole world know that we are really fed up with these two parties and we do need a change. Bangladesh is not their playground!

Let the world know that we don't want the AL or the BNP.

Abu Alam
Toronto, Canada

Businessmen's budget

A special correspondent's report (June:9) in a local English daily

states that the Finance Adviser has said (and I quote) "Businessmen care little about imposition of fresh duty. Rather they are concerned about getting uninterrupted power supply". It's true, because businessmen add profit over all costs of goods at the point of sale, including an allocation of the anticipated interest on working capital.

Naturally the more the cost, the larger the quantum of profit! Businessmen logically need more availability of electric

6X3

6X2

10X3

power; so that their quantum of output, turnover and therefore profit also increases. No wonder, sugar retail prices have shot up from June 8! Does the adviser spare a thought for the needy fixed wage earners, particularly in private sector, where palm greasing opportunities are rare, if not absent.

His concern is for about a lakh of our businessmen, the rich in society. He has totally ignored the concerns of the large numbers (about four crore fixed income group) of needy people groaning under the spiralling prices. One can only wonder what more trials and tribulations are in store for us.

The reality is "prices rise, they hardly fall". Duty reductions will not bring prices down, and that is the fact of life. Let us watch and see when and how much price will fall except for the natural harvesting season price decrease! Price rise started only a few hours after the budget speech; particularly retail price of sugar, thanks to the adviser's kindness in rationalising the duty structure for sugar import!

A service holder
Dhaka

CTG's success

The CTG along with the armed forces should get the due credit for their success in identifying and capturing the corrupt leaders of politics, business and administration. I think the message of 'zero tolerance to corruption' has been sent to all in an effective way. Now the remaining task is to bring these monstrous anti-socials to trial.

The bumpy drive against such pervasive corruption requires teamwork, courage, honesty and sincerity. The joint forces have shown their integrity along with the aforementioned attributes. I do offer my sincere thanks to them.

If democracy is the crop we are trying to harvest then containing corruption, educating the citizens and formulating a proper election administering body equipped with proper resources, are like bio-manure and bio-pesticide. The inclusion of the prefix 'bio' emphasises minimum adverse impacts. And I am convinced that the CTG is very much on the right track now.

Imtiaz Kais Risha
Expatriate Bangladeshi
Environmentalist
Tasmania, Australia

minister would mean a "Person responsible for patronising killers" (not to mention by taking bribe).

Shawkat Hossain
Kabul, Afghanistan

Neurosurgery dept.

Can the authorities tell us why there is a neurosurgery department with half a dozen neurosurgeons at Mitford Hospital!

They are sitting idle, doing nothing and maintaining no time schedule of their attendance!

Is anybody listening?
A resident of Old Dhaka
On e-mail

Inflation

Looks like inflation is beginning to become a big concern for the caretaker government as well. The many reasons and the suggested solutions that we see in the newspaper reports and columns point mainly towards a supply shock explanation. While the supply shock explanations bear quite some merit, I was wondering whether the experts are contemplating the monetary explanations equally.

I see at least two reasons for a surge in money supply. Firstly the well-known increase in remittance which is going on for quite some time.

Secondly, the black money has already accumulated in the economy. While the anti-corruption drives are supposed to reduce the inflows to the stock of black money, the biggest sources of outflows from that stock, e.g., real estate or smuggling out, are also blocked because of constant vigilance.

The only outlet for this cash money, considering the fact that the bank accounts have come under surveillance as well, is the commodity market. The usual tools of 'contractionary monetary policy' might not work in the second case.

I wonder whether the regime is contemplating changing the currency notes to deal with excessive black money.

Mohammad Irfan
Graduate School of International
Studies, Denver
Colorado, USA

Division for Tarique

This is in reference to the news that appeared in DS on June 13. I am not biased, nor have I any personal grudge against Tarique. However, what really bothers me is: on what basis this man has been granted division in jail?

It was clearly defined in the newspapers some time back who are entitled to getting division in jail.

Humayun Hyder
Zigatola, Dhaka

Politics in Bangladesh

How dirty can politics get? Today, we are asking this question to ourselves. The recent arrests of political figures unleashed some unfortunate images when one draws the picture of politics in Bangladesh.

We, the citizens, felt embarrassed and were infuriated reading newspapers over the last couple of days. I wish all of these were a dream and we are not in the situation we are. But, we cannot hide the truth and now it is time to face it.

We innocently believed whatever our politicians said before the elections. In the name of democracy, they deceived us over and over again. They failed to carry out their electoral pledges and we forgave them time after time. We introduced ourselves as citizens of the 'most corrupt country' for five years- a taint that shall always blacken our identity. Why would we (the whole nation) take the blame for a handful of selfish people? Still we waited for better days. Today, we have seen what our state would have been if this waiting period had to continue-thanks to our patriotic armed forces and the caretaker government (CTG).

How sad it is when a home minister takes money to let a criminal get away.

How cheap it is when a leader of the opposition wants to buy MPs from the ruling party. How dirty it is when a political party wants to destabilise the economy by creating havoc in the industries sector. How unacceptable it is when NGOs agree to support a particular political platform to remove an elected government.

Today, there is no politician with self-respect who can say, "I am an honest politician."

The CTG should keep in mind that we all are behind this administration. One or two speeches from Sheikh Hasina or Khaleda Zia, carrying the phrase 'in the name of people' or 'for the people' don't reflect the majority voice.

Today we urge the CTG to remove all corrupt elements from politics, only then an acceptable election is possible. We do not want to elect the ones who looted the country in the name of development. We do not want ministers who take money from criminals. Today one shall not wait to act against the leaders who patronized corruption and

terrorism. The whole country is waiting for them to be tried and I am sure the CTG along with our armed forces will not let the good work go in vain.

The people are expecting this government to rescue us from this grave situation.

The 'Winner takes all' attitude needs to be changed, and the failed system needs correction.

Reforms are necessary as 'the only thing constant in life is change.' The CTG must now focus on reforms in the parliamentary and administrative systems in the following ways:

Separate the judiciary from the executive without any delay.

The Law Commission Amendment Act of 2001 must be reformed. Laws must be approved by an independent commission before enactment.

Article 70 must be changed and MPs should be allowed to vote against their party or cross floors. (Only then the whips of parliament have some work, other than to tolerate their sons' misdeeds).

Accountability and transparency must prevail in all public institutions and strong vigilance will ensure 'check/balance' operations.

All political parties must be registered with the Election Commission.

All political parties must hold councils every 3 years (by law). Debates should be held amongst contestants seeking a party's top post. Voting must take place through secret ballots.

The business organisations (like FBCCI, DCCI, and BGMEA) must not allow any loan defaulter to be their members.

Allocate more funds for the Anti-Corruption Commission to hire efficient lawyers and carry out infrastructure development.

The nation will always remember the present CTG (along with our armed forces) for saving us from the hands of criminals masquerading as politicians.

Arafat Islam Tona
Dallas, USA

