



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.



Drainage canal

Natural canals and water bodies are similar to veins and tissues in our body. It keeps our land and water mass in balance. Canals excrete out excess water and impurities, while water bodies provide the water needed to replenish our aquifer! These functions are critical to the health of our soil and environment.

These canals and wetlands are being grabbed by opportunists of all shades and sizes. Pinaki Roy's front-page pictorial report (July 14) is a detailed account of this activi-

ty at Hatirjheel, which goes on under the nose of the CTG even today! Poor canals and wetlands are orphans with no one to protect them barring a few noble environmentalists. Slowly and surely the unscrupulous land grabbers are getting the upper hand!

Our political governments over the years have ignored or encouraged this illegal activity to gain direct or indirect financial benefits. For the CTG, curbing these nefarious activities is as vital as curbing the unending greed of our politicos. The crux of the

issue as stated in the report is: "If Begunbari and Hatirjheel cannot be saved, the drainage balance of the capital will be completely destroyed."

This statement coming from responsible sources is serious indeed! Can we not take quick and firm corrective action? Possibly, it is now or never. These nefarious activities need to be nipped in the bud; the earlier the better for all of us.

S.A. Mansoor
Gulshan, Dhaka

we predicted the eventuality of China's gaining access to Iraq's national petroleum reserves through a negotiated debt-cancellation scheme.

The strategists only are worried about the US invaders in Iraq but not about the Iraqis who are being killed en-masse in their country.

Dr. Abdul Ruff Colachal

New Delhi

Measure of leadership

Sheikh Hasina's letter touches my heart. Living in the US is rather lonely for many of us. But it is a conscious choice and the daughter of the ex-PM is no exception! Visiting an expectant daughter in the US is an expensive proposition for most Bangladeshi mothers. But luckily, the healthcare in this country, irrespective of financial status, is exceptionally good for expectant mothers - and that should spell some relief for worried mothers.

Anyway, if I recall correctly, in the 90s Sheikh Hasina was a sitting PM. And yet, leaving alone the business of 140 million Bangladeshis, she spent weeks in South Florida to look after her pregnant daughter (I presume the same daughter). A day or two is fine - but weeks!

Well, the country is now passing through a critical juncture. I cannot advise a mother, but her priority is a measure of her leadership.

Dr. Mohammad Aktaruzzaman

Wake Forest, North Carolina

No more plundering!

In 1990, I was a student of Dhaka University. I was returning home (Mohammadpur) from the university one day by a university-bus. There were 60-70 students in the bus. On our way home the bus was approaching the Mirpur Road and Science Laboratory intersection. There was a blockade at the intersection by the students of the City College for some reason. Students were throwing bricks and stones relentlessly on all the passing vehicles. Our bus driver stopped the bus before reaching the junction and was turning it to an alternate route. Suddenly, some of the students in the bus, not more than five in number, shouted at the driver not to change the direction and commanded him to follow the usual course. The bus was stopped for a few minutes, most of the students were asking the driver to change the course but they were bullied by the small group. Majority students and the bus driver himself were disappointed and reluctantly gave in to the demand of the aggressive group. As the bus was approaching the intersection, those aggressive students were shouting to the city college students not to harm the bus, or else they would retaliate. However, the huge protesting crowd did not listen, they started throwing bricks on our bus, several windows were crushed and some of the students were hurt. The bus driver turned to the Elephant Road instead of moving forward. This quick decision of the driver prevented the bus from being

I expect many more Laloo's to raise their voices for this noble cause.

Engr Mohammed Alauddin
Green Road, Dhaka

Comments

I have read very carefully the article by Mahfuzur Rahman (13 July). It does not tell us anything new about this issue. However, it presents a fair summary of some experts' views. What is not clear is how the ice melts in the polar caps and high mountain glaciers due to global warming of only a couple of degrees! Any science student knows that ice melts at zero degree Celsius whereas the ambient air temperature at the polar caps and mountain glacier areas is normally around minus 20 degrees which may have risen by say three degrees due to global warming to about minus 17 degrees.

I have broached this question to many other scientists and climatologists, but like politicians they have always failed to register the question, let alone attempt an answer.

It therefore appears that the melting of ice is accomplished by extra radiance from the sun, it is radiation rather than convection or conduction mechanism of heat transfer which is the culprit. It is this same extra radiant heat which is causing the global warming, rather

than the greenhouse effect of at most 5% of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere; 95% of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is water vapour, and its relative concentration is rising due to extra heat from the sun, causing further global warming much more quickly.

If this extra water vapour can be coagulated into rain clouds its percentage would decrease to reduce greenhouse effect much more effectively than carbon reduction, and the extra clouds would reflect the sunlight back to space to cool the earth.

So the fundamental problem seems to be global drought as there has been no rain for many years in large parts of all the continents. A lack of cloud cover over Australia and its vicinity for the last seven years or more is melting the Antarctic ice caps. In the US a forest fire is now burning everything in its path as not a drop of rain has fallen in those areas in many years. All the deserts are expanding out of control due to lack of rain. In Chad and Darfur areas there has not been any rain for 15 years or more. Whatever rain is there, it is unpredictable, sudden and irregular causing flash floods and many other problems and not bringing any steady improvement in the drought situation.

With reduction of carbon dioxide, side by side the production of rain clouds from water vapour should be studied to offset the radiance from the sun as the latter is so much more important. The Chinese preparing for the Olympics seems to have mastered the technique of precipitating rain out of rain clouds whenever they desire. They and others must now concentrate on how to produce rain clouds from excessive humidity in the atmosphere.

Engineer Shafi Ahmed
London, UK

Thank you, General

I read the news of an octogenarian peasant being jailed for his failure to pay back bank loans. But I could not think the way you thought about it. On the following day, I read about your initiative to free the aged man from the impending plight. I was emotionally overwhelmed by your exemplary action. It is indeed a rare act of selflessness.

Your prompt action for the release of the helpless man has rekindled the hope inside millions.

Kabir Hossain Taposh
Banani, Dhaka

Sk. Hasina's courage

I congratulate Sk. Hasina for her courage to speak out against the government. We need politicians who have courage, not the ones sailing with the wind.

I think her voice is very important for the poor and oppressed people of Bangladesh.

Raziul H. Mollah
Overland Park, Kansas

In response...

I am writing to protest against Syed M. Fahim's letter titled 'Sheikh Hasina's assertion'. She is a mother and could reasonably be worried about her ailing daughter. There is nothing wrong with it.

Mr. Fahim could make comments on the failure of political leaders, but how could he hold only Sheikh Hasina responsible for the corruption in the country?

If you want to blame any party for the rampant corruption, then it is the BNP.

Afsana Islam

On e-mail

Amother!

It was quite moving to read Sheikh Hasina's open letter written as a "mother" seeking to give company to her pregnant daughter living in the US. Many mothers like me would surely sympathize with the sacrifice she had to make in depriving her children for the sake of the nation.

Hasina should use this opportunity to realize what pain she had caused to mothers like us when living in the same city many of us could not visit our pregnant daughters because of the non-stop or *lagatar harta* she so recklessly imposed upon us.

She has our sympathy as a mother but not any support for what she and the other lady did to many mothers like us.

Anonymous

Chittagong

Rajuk

At long last, Rajuk is facing the music. Better late than never! Comparing Rajuk to anything else would be unrealistic. However, how about this: Rajuk the "Empire State Building" of nepotism and corruption! Nothing moves here; without dry and fresh currency notes' lubrication! All cash please! It is unbelievable.

Playgrounds were once known to be the heart of a school but at present we can hardly find any educational institution having one of its own. Our city has now an acute shortage of playgrounds. A paradise is located near our university. I see students playing

there, but to my disappointment it seems that the number of players is too large for the small ground.

Once the cities and towns had enough playgrounds for the students but at present if we make a survey throughout the whole country, we will definitely

find that their number is too small.

Now the time has come for the City Corporation and Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) to address the issue.

Syda Delrova Afroz
Department of English
I.I.U, Chittagong



PHOTO: STAR

political regimes; and now Rajuk is demolishing its own approvals, under supervision of the CTG, backed by the army.

The problem is: bad teams, perverted policy makers, non-essential development projects, and creation of back and grey holes/areas.

Now we have to go back to the basics; clean candidates, correct voter list, and transparent voting procedure. Naturally, the politicians are nagging, on the usurpation of their domain. Good dedicated leaders of the society are now trying to channel the nation into better governance. The after-effects and fall-outs cannot be remedied readily.

So the current situation is like the monsoon sky: hazy, cloudy, sunshine, overcast, raining, thunderstorms windy, stormy, and what not! This type of political circus is not abhorred in newly emerged nations (Asia, Africa, S America).

Patience is a dubious virtue, according to the grey politicians. Usually, it is a necessity, and sometimes a national obligation. We have to build a sound foundation; thereafter the structures and infrastructures follow at routine pace. Let us not beat about the bush.

A. Mahasen
Dhaka

Tigers

Legendary cricketer Imran Khan once said that successful people always know their limitations and work accordingly. They always improvise on that work to make the end results even better.

I am an ardent fan of the Tigers and as much I love to

watch them playing competitive cricket, I hate to see them fail so miserably in Test cricket as they did against the Lankans. Let me put a fact on the table before I go any further. Bangladesh are in no position to continue Test cricket against higher ranked teams until they

learn to play the longer version of the game with greater patience and better technique.

Despite our shortcomings, I am still very positive and patient and quite confident that our future is bright.

Adnan, Dhaka



PHOTO: AFP

BUILDING COLLAPSE



It is very frustrating to read news like collapse of a building constructed or under construction. Recently, the under-construction East West Medical College and Hospital building collapsed

and three people were killed. The one and only reason is very obvious: use of sub-standard raw materials like bricks and cement. Poor design and improper choice

of location are also responsible partially.

I think the government must be tough on the violators of building codes.

Sanjib Das
BUET