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# Price hike

The present caretaker government headed by Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed has completed its six months. Needless to say, this government has done some commendable jobs during this period. But at the same time we are disappointed about the price situation. Till

now no tangible step has been taken in this respect. No doubt, price hike of daily essentials has become unbearable to the common people. During political regimes we heard that political unrest and syndicates were largely responsible for the price

hike. But why should the interim caretaker government fail to contain the price hike? **Shaila Solaiman**  
MSS student  
Department of Government & Politics  
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## Woes of taxpayers

The NBR wants us to pay taxes on our past undeclared income with a 5% penalty. But is there none to understand what difficulties we face at the NBR. First of all, corruption is endemic. For filing tax returns one cannot do without paying bribe. If an honest taxpayer goes to an NBR official with honest documentation for assessment of income tax, the tax official would simply set aside those documents and start subjecting the taxpayer to harassment. In order to be relieved of those harassments and mental torture, the taxpayer would agree to pay bribe.

Corruption at the NBR, like that in many other government departments, is very well known. In the past, Transparency International (TI) also brought this to focus. If a tax payer has to pay bribe, who would expect him to pay proper tax? People are scared to go to the NBR. That is why they prefer to go to a tax lawyer. They have to pay legal fees to the tax lawyer plus the "corruption money". This becomes a hefty

amount. In many cases the actual amount of tax would be much lower than this.

We are victims of NBR corruption. The decision makers should listen to the voice of the suppressed majority. They should not insist on legally earned undisclosed income, because they should understand that NBR corruption forced it to remain undisclosed.

If the NBR is a better place now, they can look forward to a better tax paying situation from the next year onwards.

**Faruk Rahman**  
Hatirpool, Dhaka

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We appreciate the present caretaker govt's reforms in all areas. However, marginal taxpayers should not be subjected to harassment by the taxation department officials because most of them experienced suffering caused by officials from within the office. Now it is time to take action against them as well.

In Bangladesh, the tax paying culture was mainly destroyed by the officials at the NBR. Now the time has come to know by paying income tax, municipal tax what I am gaining in return-- any good road in the city, any health care facility or any security A conscious citizen will think of his rights while paying taxes.

I think people will flock to the tax office only when they will feel that there will be no harassment by the staff.

**Dr. Islam**  
On e-mail

## Reforms

Whatever the pressure or demand may be, it's a good news that the political parties are now serious about reform. I am however surprised seeing a negative attitude towards the elderly. It appears that as people cross 60 they suffer from senility and, as such, cannot be accommodated in a political party, which contradicts the theory that 'old is gold'. On the other hand, no

emphasis has ever been laid on the educational qualifications of the politicians and party heads, though this must be reckoned as the most vital point in reforming the political parties.

It is disgraceful that some of our politicians lack any educational background. I therefore propose that the reform agenda include the educational qualification of the politicians seeking election. The reform should also specify that no illiterate, semi-literate people can participate in the JS election.

**Dr. Tasaddoque Hossain**  
Malibag, Dhaka

## 27th BCS

The caretaker government has taken the decision to retake the 27th BCS viva voce amid allegations of gross irregularities. One of the irregularities is that a number of students who have not scored enough marks in the written test have acquired sufficient marks in the viva voce (by allegedly bribing

the PSC staff). Is this a solid evidence for punishing all the successful candidates?

I was a successful candidate. But I have to take the responsibility of the misdeeds committed by others! What justice has been meted out to us? This kind of justice will only evoke despair among the successful candidates.

The whole thing should be brought under the purview of a judicial inquiry. Only allegations and rumours are not enough for cancelling the exams.

**Md. Aminul Islam**  
Surjasen Hall, DU

## Not a great film

Noted writer and film director Humayun Ahmed is a household name in our country and people have high expectations from him. No matter whether it's a drama, novel or a film--his works are highly rated, sometimes over rated. He is probably the best writer of this country with a sharp sense of humour-- there's no doubt about it. All of his works have a long lasting impact on people's minds. How can we forget his character Baker bhai from the drama serial "Kothao Keu Nei" which is still fresh in our memory? In fact his writing has always appealed to the masses, especially the middle class people. No other writer has depicted the life of the middle class so perfectly like Humayun Ahmed. Therefore it's natural that all his works create enough hype in the media. Whenever it's a Humayun Ahmed film, the curiosity factor is always there. And why not? I last watched his movie "Shamol Chhaya" which was based on our liberation war and the writer portrayed the glorious war with his brilliant sense of humour. Definitely, it was a job very well done by Humayun.

But what kind of a comedy film he has made this time in the form of 'Noy Number Bipod Sangket'? I saw a full house audience at the Bashundhara Cineplex. But after watching the film, all of them felt that it was a comedy devoid of genuine fun! All of them had a high expectation from this movie since it created enough hype in the media but later turned out to be a dull affair. Humayun Ahmed himself termed the movie as a pure entertainment based comedy.

The movie has offered very little to the viewers.

**Nazmus Saquib**  
Basaboo, Dhaka

## Speaker's bill

It has been reported in your paper that "the Speaker said if the appropriate authority disagrees with his opinion and claims refund of the said money, he will abide by the decision...."

What does it mean?

**A reader**  
On e-mail

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We read with interest your report that Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar drew Taka 28 lakh medical bill

# SUST

Though the present caretaker government stands against all types of corruption but we say it with a heart full of regret that they have failed to control corruption at Shahjalal University of Science & Technology.

The sufferings of the students caused by the local touts continue unabated. Instead of taking action against the corrupt elements the university authorities remain silent.

**A student**  
On e-mail



ignoring the official objection. We also noted his own version, and a former Comptroller and Auditor General's assertion that the speaker indeed violated the basic standard of financial propriety.

Why should we, the taxpayers, be burdened with such huge medical expenses for someone who by now should have quit on health grounds?

**Nayeem Jafar**  
New Jersey, US

## Comments

Your editorial on Sheikh Hasina's arrest and temporary incarceration (pending trial) suggests that in your opinion some citizens are above the law by virtue of their political status. Sk. Hasina, Begum Zia, or HM Ershad for that matter, are now ordinary citizens - no more no less. If the due process of law of the land provides for arrest, how can you advocate any other course of action?

You talk about democracy, establishment of the rule of law, accountability and eradication of corruption often enough, yet when our political leaders are charged with allegations of the most egregious misuse of power and corruption, you want that they be treated with deference!

**An ordinary citizen**  
On e-mail

## VoIP

I'm a student in an American university working towards PhD degree. I have some family members I like to be in touch with. I'm on assistantship which means I work as a research assistant or a teaching assistant to support my studies. So I'm always on a tight budget. Also, I like to save a little to support my poor family members back in Bangladesh.

Previously, I used to use different phone cards- mostly from Access Asia- to communicate with my family members in Bangladesh. The rate was like above 150 minutes for 10 dollars. However, Access Asia is now out of market - they don't sell phone cards any more. Also, other companies who are still selling phone cards or new companies which emerged recently are charging very high -- for example, Cardinal Talk gives around 50 minutes for 10 dollars which is too expensive compared to what we used to get before and also too expensive compared to what people from most other countries get.

This is a consequence of shutting down VoIP service. This is affecting almost all people abroad. I think most people are immensely frustrated about this as I am.

I believe, it would have been wise if the government imposed taxes from back date on the VoIP business, rather than shutting them down. Also, after they shut it down, they could have legalised it and put things in a legal frame work, so that the VoIP business could start again without delay.

**Ataur Katebi**  
On e-mail

## Mobile phone and drivers

A speedy bus with passengers was running on a highway. Suddenly, a sound of ring was heard which was coming from the driver's mobile phone and the driver started talking. During the conversation the driver got very angry at one stage. The passengers became anxious, nervous and helpless!

Some days ago we came to know this story through BTV's popular "Itadi" in which a student described it through a letter.

Although mobile phone is very essential but it is indeed very dangerous in the hands of drivers.

Some years ago a letter of mine over this matter was published in another English daily. But still we see the use of mobile phone by the drivers holding the steering. We also know that there are restrictions in many countries on the use of mobile phone by the drivers. Recently, the Bangladesh government has imposed a bar in this respect. But the drivers do not follow it, and we do not see any driver being punished for violating the rule.

Severe punishment should be awarded to the offenders for ensuring the safety of the passengers

and the drivers themselves.

**Harun**  
Dhaka

## Truly independent?

These days we hear a lot about "Shadhin Durniti-domon Commission (ACC)", "Shadhin Election Commission (EC)", "Shadhin Bichar Bibhag (Independent Judiciary)", "Shadhin BCS" etc. We believe independence of these important departments/offices are the people's demand of the time.

We the commoners do not know what type of "shadhinata" they will enjoy and what accountability they will have to the nation.

Will the government be able to remove abuse of power from these organisations?

**Shafiqul Islam**, On e-mail

## Autism

Autism is a complex pervasive disorder that involves the functioning of the brain. It is a neurological disorder and not simply a psychiatric disorder, though typical characteristics include problems with social relationships and emotional communication as well as stereotyped patterns of interests, activities and behaviours. It also involves problems with sensory integration.

Typically, it appears during the first three years of life. It is estimated that it occurs in approximately 2 to 6 in 1,000 individuals, and is 4 times more prevalent in males than females. People with autism might have problems talking with you, or they might not look you in the eye when you talk to them. They may have to line up their pencils before they can pay attention, or they may say the same sentence again and again to calm themselves down. They may flap their arms to tell you they are happy, or they might hurt themselves to tell you they are not. Some people with autism never learn how to talk.

Early diagnosis and intervention are vital to the future development of the child. It is widely considered that a cure will not be found very soon, because autism involves aspects of brain structure determined very early in a baby's life. Thankfully, there are a variety of medications designed to help minimize the symptoms of autism, as well as to help enhance learning. In some cases, these medications can help people with autism lead an almost 'normal' life.

**Sabrina Rifat**  
Dept. of English  
IIU, Chittagong

# Smoking continues...



Smoking kills millions around the world every year. The previous BNP government banned smoking in public places by introducing the "Anti-tobacco Act", which was welcomed by the people. But, because of our old tradition (!) of breaking law, this act is ineffective now. It seems to have gone into "deep freeze".

People are smoking anywhere, anytime without caring for others! They are smoking in public places, universities and even in the court area without any restriction.

I think it is time the law was enforced strictly.

**Md. Ashraf Uddin**  
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IIU, Chittagong

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