



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.

Global rainfall



PHOTO: AFP

Recently, the scientific journal Nature has published a finding "Human-induced climate change has affected global rainfall patterns over the 20th Century."

The worst flooding to hit the UK in 60 years has left hundreds of thousands of people without electricity or drinking water and destroyed crops. Some rivers were still rising, with the western section of the River Thames on the verge of bursting its banks. This emergency is far from over, and further flooding is extremely likely. Flooding has affected much of central and western Britain, with Tewkesbury, a medieval market town 180km northwest of London, among the hardest hit with water 1.5m deep in places. Elsewhere, homes and businesses were flooded, roads submerged and trains and buses cancelled.

The weather facing Britain is consistent with conditions caused by the La Nina weather system, which is caused by cooling of ocean waters.

Climate models have, for a number of years, suggested that human activity has led to changes in the distribution of rain and snow across the globe. Boosting renewable energy, reducing deforestation and improving energy efficiency can help to achieve cuts in global emissions by 50% by 2050. Without this, we have to face devastating consequences.

Dr. Sadia Islam
Brand Executive
Central Product Management Department
Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd

Dubious distinction!

Syed Rasel, the Bangladeshi pacer is now part of cricket history. It's not because of his performance, but for being on the wrong side of the 'bright' moments of other players who made history with their 'performances'!

His name will be highlighted as the 700th Test victim of Muralitharan and also as the 300th ODI victim of Sanath Jayasuriya!

What a coincidence!

Dr Abu Sayeed, FRCS
United Hospital
Dhaka

Make it clear

The CTG must make it clear to the foreign govts/UN that politicians are arrested not for political reasons but only for corruption/illegal money-laundering, and request

them not to interfere in the internal affairs of Bangladesh. The CTG must request the USA and the UK to give details of all politicians' bank accounts. All money transactions made by our politicians are recorded by the banks there.

The CTG will get a solid evidence of illegal money-laundering made by the corrupt politicians.

We should not support any corrupt politician, whoever he/she might be.

Dr. Majumder
Darmstadt, Germany

Deplorable habit

In our country some political, economic, social and religious leaders have the condemnable and deplorable habit that is influenced by a characteristic known as 'porosree katorota'.

Whether a Bangladeshi citizen seeks a job, business opportunities or even a nomination of the major political party -- the political, economic, social and religious leaders should shun the very bad habit of 'porosree katorota' and eventually promote balanced development in all the fields and spheres across the country.

Golam Ashraf
Gulshan, Dhaka

Sheikh Hasina's arrest

We are shocked at the arrest of Sheikh Hasina on charges of extortion. This is how the government is distancing itself from the mass population. Oblivious of the tenacious agitation led by Sheikh Hasina that brought about this change for reform, reform now

becomes rhetoric to remove the heads of the two main political parties. And the space for opposition will be captured by the religion-based parties.

The French Revolution, which has become the supreme example of revolution, is seen to be riddled with paradoxes and to give out conflicting messages. Its guiding philosophy is the enlightenment philosophy of reason, of the rational order and harmony of nature and human nature but its unintended outcome is a reversal, the opposite of reason!

Astudent
On e-mail

Sheikh Hasina's arrest merits due attention. But why politicise it? She is being charged with extortion. She is not above the law. And don't forget that she is the leader of those who literally considered themselves to be above the law for the last few decades!

Our country needs to be run by people with sound mental health. Hitherto, we have been led by megalomaniacs.

Their insatiable desire to take for themselves what others possess is now well documented.

Let the law take its due course.

Mahbub Haque
Sweden

Tax on credit card

It is a very good decision that this caretaker government has withdrawn 3% Advance Income Tax (AIT) on the credit cards from the first of July, 2007. The immediate past government imposed this tax on all the credit card transactions from the fiscal year 2006 to 2007, assuring the customers that the tax paid in advance would be adjusted with the tax to be paid in accordance with their income and the credit card-providers also informed the cardholders to provide them with a certificate of tax payment against their card usage. So all the credit cardholders came under this tax on every single amount debited from their card account such as card's annual fee, various charges, interest, fees and all transactions. The off-putting impact of imposing tax on the credit card and the merits of its withdrawal need to be discussed, as it will help the respective authorities to look before they leap-- something like the imposition of AIT.

Though availing the credit card facility does not mean to be an addition to the income of the credit card users and a certain amount of VAT is charged at the very beginning of the card's issuance, they were taxed. Many people raised the question as to why they would pay the tax in advance, as they were not assured of getting the return in exchange of their advance payment. And there are many credit card users who are not under the income tax net but they had to pay tax against their credit cards. How

can they adjust this tax? Will this money equivalent to the paid tax be returned to those customers in cash or in any other form? Many people prefer to use credit card instead of cash considering better security. But due to this tax entailment, credit cards are turning into a luxury. So they were compelled to close the card account. Consequently, the banks and other institutions that issue credit cards could not retain a certain number of customers and the growth of the card account was not as much as it could be without the burden of AIT. But there were many cardholders who could neither close nor continue their card accounts, as they were not able to pay off the outstanding amount required prior to closing the account. Some of them have run into debt and many others have become defaulters. It is less likely that those people will again get cards, as their payment record is very poor. Even many sales executives of the credit card sales department who used to work at the field level were sacked because of their poor performance, since the customers were reluctant to avail the cards due to 3% tax.

However it is very praiseworthy that the government has withdrawn AIT on credit cards and so some banks like Eastern Bank Ltd., Brac Bank Ltd, Bank Asia and others that are almost ready to launch credit cards or have recently launched it can now happily issue credit cards in the market. If the credit card

providers are encouraged to issue credit cards, there will be tough competition in the market. As a result, the customers will be offered a competitive price and the government's revenue collection will increase, as more VAT will be earned from the growing number of cardholders.

But how can it be ensured by the government that the AIT earned from the customers who cannot adjust this tax as they do not have to pay any income tax will be paid back to them accordingly or this money will be utilised for them?

Pulok Debnath
Branch Risk Officer
Standard Chartered Bank
Bogra Branch

DU teachers

We the students of Dhaka University feel ashamed of our teachers' deeds.

They are politicised beyond measure.

M Rahman
On e-mail

Fascinating building!

I was on the net to catch up some stories on Harry Potter. But interestingly enough, I found a new piece of information that I would like to share with others. It's that a new under-construction building in Dubai named Burj Dubai (1,680 feet now, but expected to be 2,275 feet by 2008) has become the world's tallest building, beating Taiwan's Taipei 101 (1,667 feet). I visited their

site <http://www.burjdubai.com> and saw the photo of the fascinating building!

Scionara Shehry
Mastermind School
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Our politics

In the recent months we have seen so much twisting in Bangladeshi politics that we had never seen before. We can say we are going through a change and we need it. The AL and the BNP used to think that only they could define democracy and the 14 crore people were just their servants. I think only a few people are actively involved in Bangladeshi politics and most of them got involved in it because of their own interests.

It's easy to talk about democracy, and never try to implement it, as we saw during the AL and BNP regimes. We need a change in Bangladeshi perspective, but not as defined by Hasina or Khaleda.

It's our time for the general 14 crore citizens to come forward and ask the corrupt, criminal party leaders to remain silent.

Abu
Ottawa, Canada

“Harassment” of politicians

There have been some discontentment among the workers and supporters of a political party upon detention of their leaders. Their spontaneous adverse reaction is natural. But one should realize that

whatever happened was the outcome of a legal process. Therefore, they should respect the judiciary. The court cannot but take cognizance of a specific case filed and the charges framed by the law enforcing agencies after due investigation.

The judiciary is now independent and there is no scope whatsoever to blame the administration in this regard. The right thing for the political parties to do would be to fight the case legally and let the truth surface. If someone is not found guilty then as per provision of the law the person would be released with honor and there is provision in the law also for punishment of the plaintiff for instituting a false case. Let the law take its own course because nobody is above the law and the law shall prevail.

In this regard the attitude of the Dhaka University teachers was not acceptable. Although most of them may have political affiliations being members of either "Blue" or "White" factions belonging to the two political parties, their decision to wear black badges and boycotting classes in protest against so called "harassment" of their leaders perhaps were not in conformity with their prestigious profession and ethics.

However, the good news is that the general public, sans a handful of party workers and politicians, is fully aware of their misdeeds.

Mohammad Ataul Hoque
On e-mail

Disputes with neighbours

The caretaker government should solve some outstanding issues with our neighbours India and Myanmar like the dispute over South Talpatti Island, delimitation and demarcation of maritime borders, and the demarcation of land borders with India.

We don't like the idea of Indian or Burmese fishermen fishing in our waters (I admit I don't know whether they are still doing that) or waking up in the morning and finding out that a cattle trader or a farmer has been shot dead by the BSF.

A Rahman
A Levels student
Dhaka

