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Relief operations

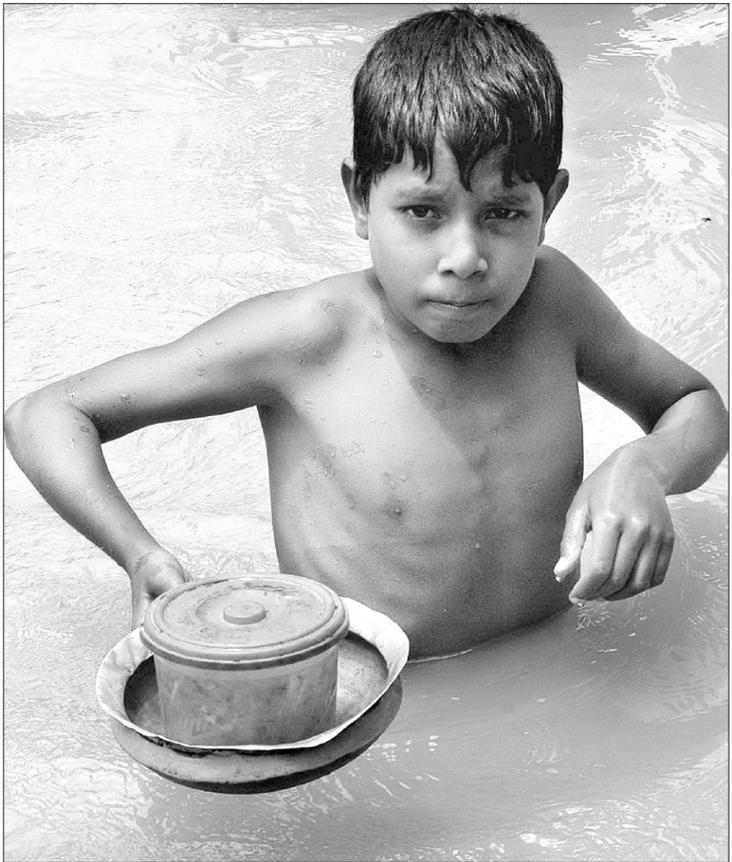


PHOTO: AFP

Sometimes good intentions are not enough, you need people with real leadership quality and guts to take care of things even at the risk of

getting blamed because everyone cannot be helped simultaneously or satisfactorily. So I say to the CTG, "Get out of the way and the patri-

ots will come from all over the country and abroad to conduct relief operations." **M Zaman NYC**

by the people.
Zakaria Khondker
Boston, USA

Trial of collaborators

On the evening of July 30, the ETV interviewed Jamaat leader Ali Ahsan Mujahid, a Pakistani collaborator and commander of the dreaded Al-Badr in 1971. He tried to convince the audience that he was just a bystander during the 1971 genocide committed by the Pakistan army. He even claimed that his party Jamaat would eventually make an evaluation of 1971 and make it public. He also claimed they are in no hurry to come to power and are willing to be partner with any party to reach that ultimate goal.

It was possibly an attempt by ETV to bring the Jamaat leader to a 'media trial' through this programme where valiant freedom fighter Lt. General Mir Shaukat (ret'd) and Major General Ibrahim (ret'd) literally accused him (via telephone) of his (Mujahid's) participation in the genocide of Bengalees by collaborating as a Pakistani agent in 1971. Which of course Mujahid denied and showered great tributes to the gallant freedom fighters.

The time has come to seriously demand the trial and punishment of the Pakistani military officers and their Bengali agents (Razakars, Al-Badr and Al-Shams) who committed crimes against humanity in 1971. The mindless killing, rape, arson and forced evacuation by those people cannot go unpunished. The crimes they have committed keep haunting us and it is now a perfect time to raise this issue of 'trial and punishment' not just 'truth and reconciliation'. We don't want just an apology for those heinous crimes but those culprits and killers of 1971 must be punished.

They should not be allowed to come back as political leaders. Like the drive against corruption, the drive against the perpetrators of the 1971 genocide should become part of our agenda too. **Akku Chowdhury**
Banani, Dhaka

name of reform.

If the two big political break up it will not be good for our democracy. It will create a vacuum for the evil forces to fill up!

Nur Nobe
Chittagong University

National security council

I live far away from home but I never miss the interesting articles in DS. Honestly speaking, democracy needs time to grow. For example, the US democracy and political infrastructure took 200 years to grow and spread to every strata of society. While I was in Bangladesh after 15 years of absence, I was very optimistic and hopeful about the positive developments in the country. However, people must think twice before accepting the idea of setting up a national security council. In fact this will undermine our political and democratic institutions forever.

We must learn to respect our constitution and the rule of law. This is the only way we can move forward and consolidate our democracy. **Sajan USA**

In response...

Ref: "Oops! I forgot the tax"

I am happy that you are writing such news analysis regarding the two 'preferential citizens', still so called 'VVIP', who along with their families not only did not pay taxes but also became 'billionaires' grabbing people's money.

My only question is that how come these people did not pay their taxes, what those people working in the NBR were doing? Sleeping?

Those in the NBR did nothing because they were/are also the 'beneficiaries' of the system! They got 2-3 promotions in 5 years as a reward for taking good care of those VVIPs!

You are kindly requested to write news analysis about those corrupt NBR officials too, who used to take not only salaries from the government exchequer but also got 'other benefits' from those people who were in power.

Nizamuddin
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Accelerate pace of development

It is quite disheartening to learn of the closure of the deep seaport project. As Dr. Yunus had suggested, Bangladesh really needs mega-seaports, mega-airports and mega-highways and I wish to add, an effective rule of law. We are now witnessing the application of the rule of law in our country, something never witnessed before. We wish this will continue unabated and thank and congratulate our armed forces for helping to establish the rule of law and changing our mindsets to conform to it.

While the rule of law must be efficiently and effectively enforced, applied and spread to each and every aspect of our life to protect and encourage honesty, integrity and efficiency, we urge the govt to also build mega-seaports (in Chittagong & Khulna), mega-airports (in Dhaka, Chittagong & Sylhet), and mega-highways to connect all the divisions, sub-divisions and districts of the country so that the economic activities are automatically boosted. Electricity, water and gas supplies should be made available but we must take the necessary steps to prevent wastage of these valuable things. The Almighty does not love the wasters.

We have lost almost four decades without any development and hence, we must undertake all developmental activities on a war footing! **Qamruddin Chowdhury**
One-mail

Two women

Some culprits who were benefited by the 'black' democracy in the last fifteen years are now crying for Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia. If these two women disappear from our political arena, I think those who are blind about them will realise their mistake. I am really shocked to see that these two women still believe

Prices of essentials

Recently (from 24.07.07 to 04.08.07) I visited Kolkata. To meet my curiosity I visited several kitchen markets of the mega-city and found that prices of some of the items are almost identical with Dhaka. But some items like potato are pretty cheap in Kolkata.

However, due to the devastating floods prices are soaring in Dhaka. I have heard that prices in Kolkata market are also soaring for the same reason.

One should keep in mind that supplies from allover India favour the Kolkata market,

whereas Dhaka is dependent on import from India for some items.

A constant watch over the subcontinent markets will give insight regarding price behaviour of essentials.

I, therefore, request you to open a column on market analysis by some competent analysts. This column will be an interesting reading.

Kazi Nasim Ahmed
Zigatolal Notun Rasta
Dhaka



PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

that they can play an important role for the welfare of the country. I think they have already lost their moral right to lead the country. We have seen the example set by Sonia Gandhi in India. We need such great woman.

We are a very unfortunate nation. When women are emerging as powerful leaders all over the world, we are compelled to get rid of them! Actually, they have no quality except inheriting a platform which was borrowed from the father and the husband.

Not only me but also the general people of our country never want to return to the suffocating position that we found ourselves in before 1/11.

I hope that the future leaders will take lessons from the political debacle that the BNP and the Awami League are facing now. **Mohammad Anisur Rahman**
M.com (Management)
Govt. Commerce College
Chittagong

Hasina's comments

It was reported in your newspaper that Sheikh Hasina's estimated wealth might be around Tk 2 crore, including Tk 1.19 crore interest from savings. If the report is true, I would like to mention here that 3/4 months back when Dr. Yunus wanted to join politics, Sheikh Hasina made a comment that "Shudkhor and ghushkhor are the same" (those who take interest or bribe fall in the same category).

So, taking Tk 1.19 crore interest from different banks will also be treated as the same type of offence as taking bribe. The sympathisers of Sheikh Hasina must remember that the comment made by her is applicable to all. **Faiz Dhaka**

Costly medicare!

What on earth was more baffling to reconcile with than Speaker Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar's drawing of Tk 28 lakh as medical bill in the last five years of BNP rule!

Bangladesh, to the bewilderment of its half-fed, half-educated and sickly citizens, has come to know that its legion numbers of big shots have become famous for only big and big haul of extortion, corruption and toll collection, all by abuse of power. How come the speaker who holds the sublime position in parliament with an aura of highest moral scruple could draw and devour such

a big amount of public money without being sent abroad for life saving treatment or surgery or transplantation? He knows it well that we have only Tk 320/- per head in our yearly budget (this year's allocation is Tk 4957 crore for about 15 crore population) in the health sector, and greater section of our poor masses do not even get free treatment/medicine worth that very scanty amount, for hospitals, especially thana health complexes are run with deplorably insufficient medicines; that too for lack of money. From the secretary down to class four government servant, each gets Tk 500/- per month with his pay and that comes to Tk 6000/- a year.

As the reports of arrests of ministers, law-makers, businessmen and party leaders at different tiers followed by reports of how they amassed unimaginable fortunes pour in, one gets down to the fact that they, and many others yet to be caught, vied with and indulged in a spree to mint money by any means, come what may for the country and its poor masses. A huge sum of money was thus spent during the long five years on the leaders of the ruling coalition and their supporters! And you have seen what little did they deliver for the well being of the masses.

Such dissipation-inured Bangladesh is now facing the real music! **Murtaza Bashir**
Nayatola, Maghbazar, Dhaka

The only way out

Reform -- the oft-repeated word these days-- is the need of the time. But general people feel that it should have been done in each and every political party many years ago.

It is a matter of pity that we have politicians, their parties, and almost all political parties pronounce the word "democracy", but they have not practised democracy even in the functioning of their own party. People with money and muscle usually become leaders.

People, especially the businessmen, have to pay a big amount to these parties or the leaders in the name of donation. But the parties do not maintain any cash book or ledger to keep record of such money. Now the time has come to appoint accountants and internal and external auditors to record and verify the transactions and make those public.

Asian Cup

I would like to congratulate the Iraq national football team for winning their first Asian Cup. Although they initially drew with Thailand, they came back strongly and surprised everyone by defeating the mighty Australians 3-1. Eventually they reached the semis and yet again defeated another strong opponent, the Koreans. Then they lifted the trophy by defeating the favourites Saudi Arabia in the final match. This just goes to show their mental strength and commitment to the team. Despite the fact that their country is experiencing serial bomb blasts, killings, violence on a regular basis, they did not allow those factors to affect their performance at all. They played like valiant soldiers in a battlefield and knew that their national pride was at stake.

Even our insipid cricket team can learn something from them! I believe that they deserved to win the trophy more than any other team. A country which forgot to laugh finally got a chance to rejoice and cheer

about something, although celebrations were cut short due to the unfortunate bombing incident which killed 50 people.

I would like to end by quoting a line from their hardworking and inspiring coach Jorvan Vieira who said "I have Sunnis, I have Shiites, and I have no problems with that. They never talk about politics."

Wasif Wahed
Old DOHS, Dhaka

Political vacuum and beneficiaries

History tells us colonial masters used to malign local politicians on a regular basis. What colonialists learned following the 1857 uprising was that military forces alone couldn't liberate the natives; another looming threat was rising in the horizon. Natives were getting organised under political parties and were increasingly raising their voices. For the colonial masters the only way was to prove that those natives were unworthy of self-rule. This, though not successful ultimately, lingered the colonial rule and ensured drainage of resources for a longer time.

Colonial masters benefited from the malicious campaign against the native politicians. This was equally true in both British and Pakistani colonial era.

The present government is following the same techniques. While businessmen, bureaucrats and politicians all have their shares in corruption, the burden is now disproportionately on the politicians. The law may be blind, but the enforcement is not blind to its target, it sees politicians more clearly than ex-bureaucrats or businessmen or religion traders. The publicity of confidential confessions of some politicians, the letter of Abdul Jalil, is part of the smear-campaign. This will benefit a few, but harm the nation as a whole. The youths will despise politics and politicians even more.

Finally, don't forget the multi-nationals and global interest groups. We have lots at stake-seaports, gas, Tata-Mittal investment proposals, trans-shipment, and IMF-World Bank's agenda, to name a few. It's much easier to get a deal like Kafco from a dictator or an un-elected government with a rubber-stamp parliament than a government represented

DU teachers

Those who are living abroad and criticising the DU teachers' act of wearing black badges have already forgotten that these teachers came on the streets to protest the autocratic rule of General Ershad and totally boycotted their classes in the 1990s until his downfall. Then, nobody raised any question; rather people applauded these teachers and rallied behind them for the resurrection of democracy in Bangladesh. Even before the liberation war, teachers and students of DU initiated most of the democratic movements along with the political parties. Later, many of them took part in the liberation war and by virtue of which we got an independent country.

This time around, politics is totally banned in Bangladesh, people are under emergency rule. In the name of caretaker government's anti-corruption drive, fundamental rights of people are suspended. It is clear that the CTG is mishandling corruption cases and politics, putting a former PM behind the bars and telling her to submit her wealth after grabbing her bank and other documents making laws of their own after 1/11! Others, like the reformists, are doing everything in line with the government's desire, though the media exposed their corruption time and again. But they are still untouched by the CTG because they are 'reformists'.

At the moment, the CTG seems to have been derailed from their duties. In fact, DU teachers are again showing the right path to the nation. **Suman Shanto, Australia**

Reform

Political party reform is very important for transparency and accountability. But we watch that the caretaker government wants to break that the two big political parties in the

heads toward imbalance.

People should be encouraged to plant trees. Otherwise, time will come when we will see the blue sky and green forests in the animation films or pictures only.

Cantara Wali Ruhi
Mgt department, DU

Plant more trees

While we need to plant more and more trees in our city, Dhaka University is cutting down the big trees which have been giving us shades for years and making the environment worth living. There are not so much trees on Dhaka University campus as on

Jahangirnagar University campus. The atmosphere at JU is always cool and comfortable. Why? It's because of the trees, there is always a kind of natural coolness in the air. Trees are very vital elements of the nature, the more we cut them down, the more the nature



Harassment of commuters

We are literally prisoners in the hands of the CNG auto-rickshaws and cabs. Would like to bring to the notice of the law enforcers that even after raising the fares of the CNG autorickshaws, they still refuse to go to any destination. Is there no one to come to the aid of the people? We, the working class people, face this situation every morning and evening to hear a "No" or "raise it by another Tk 10/20, or they want to go by "contract" and charge exorbitant fares from the passengers, and we are compelled to pay the same. I come from Nikunja with my son and face this problem every

day, even whilst returning from work from Mohakhali area, the CNG auto-rickshaws have a million excuses not to go. As per media reports, we were told that the CNGs were bound to go to any place the passengers wanted them to, but now it seems the situation is worse than before.

I would request the higher authorities to please come forward and look into this and relieve the general public of their suffering from being "Prisoners of the CNG", as most of us don't have cars.

Margaret Das
Mohakhali C/A
Gulshan, Dhaka



PHOTO: STAR