



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.

Gear up relief operations

Flood has again hit Bangladesh hard. Scarcity of food, drinking water and medicine has become a serious problem for the marooned people.

The devastation in terms of damage to lives, crops, livestock and infrastructure in the country, year after year, because of this natural calamity has become a major concern for the suffering people. Till now, 44 of the 64 districts have been badly affected with about 20 million people going through extreme hardship due to the loss of dwelling houses and crops. Sadly, as one official figure reveals, the fury of the flood has claimed 226 lives as of 10/8/07. The suffering of the 20 million people having no food, no shelter, no drinking water and last of all no medicine is tragic.

The sudden cataclysm that has overwhelmed one-third of the country is no doubt alarming. But the disaster that is unfolding in the wake of the flood triggers further consequences. Water is already contaminated and would remain so for months to come. Water-

borne and cold-related diseases have already broken out in the flood-affected areas. Every day, hundreds of children along with adults are being admitted to the hospital. People will start dying unless relief aids in the form of food and medicines can be sent in time. On the other hand, cattle population might perish in the huge mass of water if water logging continues indefinitely.

The World Food Programme (WFP) urged the donors and international community to continue to be generous in helping the flood-affected people of Bangladesh. "We are concerned about the affected people living at the flood shelters and under open sky," urged Douglas Broderick, WFP representative in Bangladesh.

Everybody must extend a helping hand to the people in distress.

Nicholas Biswas, *On e-mail*



Comments

I read all your articles in the Point Counterpoint page on Wednesday, August 15. As a non resident Bangladeshi, I don't get an opportunity to discuss such matters with fellow country people.

A lot has been written about the honesty of purpose of some of the people leading the country at present. I would like to know if anyone of them had any contribution to our liberation war. It's just a query.

Nasreen Rahman
Heaton, Bradford
UK

Ban on private coaching

It is really good news that the government is seriously considering imposing a ban on private coaching or tutoring by school & college teachers. It is hoped that the directive of the chief adviser in this respect will be implemented without further delay. There is no doubt the ban will bring the following benefits:

Sound teaching atmosphere in schools & colleges that would

enhance quality of education and present a level playing field for all students.

Many guardians will get financial relief. Many even indulge in corruption to make the money needed for this purpose.

Students will get more time to study at home and save time & money spent running after the teachers & coaching centres. The matter is worse for girl students as they always need some one to accompany them.

In order to make the ban on private coaching or tutoring to be really effective, the following measures need to be considered.

Teachers' wages & other benefits should be increased after imposing the ban & ensuring that they obey the government instruction. For this, the tuition fees of the schools & colleges may be increased & probably most of the guardians will support it. Because in the long run it will be beneficial to all the parties.

Each school & college should regularly monitor that their students do not engage private tutors even in their houses. Otherwise, the gap will be filled up by the university

students.

It is earnestly hoped that the directive of the chief adviser will be implemented as soon as possible, which will be another milestone decision of this government.

Engr. Md. Aminul Hoque
Khalishpur, Khulna

Good article

Mr. Khalequzzaman's write-up published on 12 August clearly shows the problems of our coal mine areas. The government, however, should emphatically consider environmental issues, local people's interest and above all the overall profit reckoning equation. The Daily Star can publish more articles written by renowned geologists and shed light on the issue.

Md. Moniruzzaman

*Department of Geography and Environmental Studies
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IT in Bangladesh



Initiatives for globalisation seem to be the spirit of the day. And these initiatives have the information technology as one of their weapons. We find that some prominent industrialists have come forward for investing in the IT industry. Some international IT based conglomerates have opened sales offices and training centres in Bangladesh. So the future prospect of the IT industry in Bangladesh is undoubtedly bright. Some talented students of BUET have brightened the image of Bangladesh in the world by placing themselves in a commendable position.

Internet has brought the distant world near our doors. The extensive use of Internet is another pre-requisite for IT development. The fact that our poor country has proved itself

much advanced in the IT field does hold out great hope for us all. Many meritorious students are demonstrating their merit getting good positions in the international level competitions. Various companies are arranging programming contests and getting project work done. Now, the IT industry of Bangladesh is booming day by day. It is going to be the driving force for our economic advancement.

So, we are optimistic that the government will take the necessary steps to expand the IT sector, it would be the materialisation of a demand long felt by us.

AKM Anisul Hoque
Metropolitan University, Sylhet

Flood and price hike

Green chilly is bitter than ever: the prices of other kitchen items are on the rise. Blame it on the recent flood or the lean period before the harvest, the prices of the essentials are soaring day by day. With the good portion of the country being inundated, this phenomenon of price-hike is a matter of great concern that calls for immediate action.

According to some observers, the drive against adulteration and hoarding, which was initiated by this government during the first quarter of this year, has put the businessmen on the alert. This hampers the normal functioning of the market. Although the demand is there, the supply of goods is not sufficient. Consequently, the common people are suffering as the heat of the soaring prices hurt them most.

As I travel by tempo or a local bus, I can hear people grumbling about the spiraling prices of the essentials. They seem to be more concerned about this matter than anything else, say when the next election is going to be held. We think the interim government will take effective measures—not some draconian action—to bring down the rocketing prices of essentials.

Zabed Wali
Pahartali, Chittagong
Anti-smoking law

We know that 'the anti-smoking law' was passed in parliament on March 13, 2005. According to the law, smoking is prohibited in public spaces like bus-stands, railway stations, subway stations, market places, museums, zoos, public transports such as trains, buses, launches, steamers etc.

But we see that this law is being broken by smokers. Some addicts are smoking here and there though they know that it's a bad habit, dangerous for health, and harmful not only physically but also financially. On the other hand, the air is also polluted by smoking.

The smell of the cigarette is unpleasant and intolerable to the non-smokers. They can't tolerate the smell of cigarette. When it is smoked, non smokers may feel sick. And in buses and trains, the passengers suffer from headache due to smoking by others.

I'd like to appeal to the present caretaker government to enforce the anti-smoking law without further delay.

Md. Mohsin Uddin
Dept. of English, IIUC

Community centre in Dhanmondi
We are the residents of Dhanmondi Road number 3A and are facing some serious problems in our

locality. For the last few years we have been suffering from immense traffic problem in our road (which has a dead end and is supposed to be a residential area). This artificial problem has been created by a community centre. Be it day or night, they hold parties and for that reason vehicles are parked in front of all the houses/apartments which make life unbearable. You have to wait for 10/15 minutes to bring your car to the road or to walk and get any vehicle. These vehicles are parked in a haphazard way.

During the time of the caretaker government we have noticed so many changes taking place and hoped that the pledge to restore the residential character of Dhanmondi would benefit us tremendously. But this message did not bother some businessmen and they still find ways to continue their business, creating problems for the residents.

I would request the authorities to go for a quick investigation into this matter and allow us to enjoy the benefits of a truly residential area.

Munna

On behalf of the residents of Dhanmondi Dhaka

Zabed Wali

Pahartali, Chittagong