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Subduing West Indies



Begum Zia and Sheikh Hasina

We were flabbergasted at the statement made by Begum Zia to release SK Hasina and dismiss false charges against her. An amusing episode is being played in the political arena of Bangladesh. Only a few months ago the two leaders could not tolerate each other. Their obstinate attitude made the country a veritable hell. Instead of solving national problems for the well being of the people, they had brought the country to the brink of disaster.

They were never united on any national problem, rather people had seen them united on the question of raising the MPs' salary. The people had seen them united on the question of import of duty-free cars for the MPs. The people had seen them united on the question of fixing the status of MPs.

The people had suffered enough in their hands!
GMF Abdur Rob
Baridhara DOHS, Dhaka

UK visa

It is a great pleasure that "Working holiday visa facility in UK" has been re-introduced for Bangladeshis.

People of the country are keenly interested to apply for it. But due to the requirement of producing a medical certificate, they cannot apply. There is a long queue in this field. Communicating with the 'call centre' is very tough. However, if someone gets in touch, he gets an appointment after six months.

It may be diminished by:
1. Appointing more doctors/experts in the outposts.
2. Opening more centres.
3. Allowing people to apply without medical certificate on the condition that the visa would be (if issued earlier) cancelled if someone is found medically unfit.
Helal Uddin Ahmed
Jallarpur, Sylhet

9/11

We shall never forget 9/11, for the tragic incident not only changed the world political matrix but also affected the lives of millions even in a country like Bangladesh.

I pray for the departed souls.
Hafeejul Alam
A former civil servant



Congratulations, Tigers! We knew you could do it and win big time. And you could have done it years ago, if only you had listened to us and dumped the useless players.

The jinx is gone, and all we have to do is roar along with the Tigers as they roar to victory!!!

Sumaiyah Afrin
Eskaton, Dhaka

On 13 September 2007, Bangladesh won the ICC World Twenty20 cricket match against West Indies by a huge margin of 6 wickets with 12 balls remaining. It is the 5th biggest victory (by wickets) after South Africa (two occasions), New Zealand and Pakistan in the latest thrilling version of cricket. The second youngest captain, after P Utseya of Zimbabwe, Mohammad Ashraful hammered 61 runs just off 27 balls which helped him to become the highest strike rate (203.92%) player of the world in the shortest version of the game. His 50 off 20 balls (7 x 4, 3 x 6) is the fastest fifty in Twenty20. Earlier, the record was held by Jayasuriya of Sri Lanka (23 balls).

Bangladesh also showed nice team-effort in the match.

Saif Tinku
On e-mail

which I am sure all the readers will agree with.

The simple rationale is that during the month of Ramadan the period of most household activities is around Iftar time; when lights are needed. Further, the Tarabi prayers also fall during the maximum demand period for power. Finally, during the month of Ramadan, the very nature of household activities increases the need for more lighting during evenings and nights.

From the twentieth day of Ramadan the Eid shopping tempo picks up; with more lighting and illumination in shops and bazars during the maximum demand period of 6:00 to 10:pm. The scenario during the middle of October is bound to be worse; when Eid shopping will overlap with Puja shopping and Puja decorations. With both the major communities on a holiday mood; particularly in the evenings, power demand is bound to shoot up beyond anticipation!

Given this situation, no amount of asking and tasking by the power agencies and their bosses will give more power. May be we should float a tender for the immortal "Aladin's Lamp"; the "Cape of Good (last) Hope" and the only chance-- if dreams could be realities! Power management in Bangladesh is based on the simple fact of "Robbing Peter to pay Paul". In this case "Peter" is nondescript areas and "Paul" is cities! The first "apostle" to get paid is Dhaka followed by Chittagong, Khulna, Sylhet and then Rajshahi; where unfortunately no Rajas live now Asking mosques to have their own power generators, or even hiring these during Ramadan is a really big ask! As far as I am aware many (if not all) mosques in Dhaka get their electricity free! The CTG should look into it; and without fear or favour ask the mosques to pay for their power; may be at 30 to 40 percent discount, so that at least part of the variable cost is recovered.

In my opinion, free power for mosques is not fair; unless the same facilities are extended to mandirs and churches. This policy matter should be sorted out by the CTG now, to take care of this anomaly, which in my opinion, goes against the spirit of equality for all.

Enough power for all: easier said than done! Even our CTG has given tall promises with timeframes; which I questioned in these columns earlier last month. From approval; to power at the grid; a time frame of thirty months will be fantastic; if achieved! One only wonders; why our "powers to be" do not connect up all in-house generators; both full-time or stand-by, and put it parallel to the grid. This will be a cheaper, quicker and modular approach to substantially increase all time grid power availability by around 100MW. But who will bell the cat, if not the CTG; which can act without fear or favour, or any political baggage attached. The time for this is now!

S.A.Mansoor
Gulshn, Dhaka

Stranded Pakistanis

I must strongly defer with the idea of granting citizenship to the stranded Pakistanis and making them voters. This looks like another process of adding burden to already overpopulated Bangladesh. And, if Pakistan cannot take them, why must Bangladesh on the so-called humanitarian ground? Most of the senior and young sections of these people are not loyal to Bangladesh and they actively participated with the Pakistan army in the atrocities committed against us in 1971. They never asked for any forgiveness. If they are made voters, it is not difficult to realise that this will help the anti-liberation forces and the fanatic parties. As they are Pakistani citizens, Pakistan should take them back. We were generous enough to let them live here, that's enough!

While for all the other good works, the current CTG can get applause, this move cannot be hailed at all.

Ashraf, Parvez Monon
On e-mail

Price hike

It is unfortunate that the government could not stop the price hike of essentials. Prices are going up and up. The government took a lot of steps to control this unending price hike but all the attempts have failed.

Some illegal syndicates control the market. This must be stopped.
Mashruf Ahmed Chowdhury
Deputy Assistant Librarian
Metropolitan University, Sylhet

Unscrupulous traders...

Despite government's sincere efforts, the unscrupulous traders are still resorting to malpractice.

The whole country is experiencing the double whammy of devastating flood. Low and middle income bracket people are really in hot soup to make both ends meet. The traders are making things worse by raising the prices of essentials during the month of Ramadan!

Zia Hasan
Mohammadpur, Dhaka

Elevated Expressway

A news item published in a Bengali daily on 10 September 2007 stated that the government is going to build an Elevated Expressway in the capital to ease the traffic jam which will cost \$1,100 million. One thing I do not understand why a country like Bangladesh goes for such an extravagant project which will cost a huge amount of money.

I would like to suggest that the government build a Sky Train Line, rather than Elevated Expressway. Sky Train Line will cost half the money the government is talking about. It will also ease traffic jam and save time and space.

Any Bangladeshi who has visited Thailand and Singapore must have taken a ride on the Sky Train Line and will agree with me on the usefulness of the Sky Train

Line. Everybody knows how our office goers and other commuters suffer standing in the long queue for a long time for a bus or other means of transportation to reach the work place. The Sky Train Line will alleviate the sufferings of the commuters as well as ease traffic jam.

There are many good reasons for building a Sky Train Line in Dhaka. I would request the government to think about my proposal.

Benedict Rozario
Narinda, Dhaka

Biman issue

The Adviser in charge of Bangladesh Biman was expected to clean the Aegean Stable in Balaka Bhaban (housing the HQ of the national flag carrier). But we are utterly disappointed. The situation is progressively going from bad to worse day by day. If this is by design, then we have nothing to say.

Just to cite three incidents: Firstly, a 4-member fare-paying family was reportedly disembarked from a Dhaka-London flight a few days back to accommodate some other people. Does this incident enhance the image of the airline? Secondly, as published in a vernacular national daily, about Tk 28 crore is being incurred as loss due to Biman's failure to charter in time planes for hajj flights. Thirdly, an incalculable amount of loss has been caused due to Biman's failure to arrange timely flights for Bangladeshi expatriate workers abroad, many of whose visas have expired.

Abu Abdullah
Dhaka

The justice system

I would like to congratulate Mr. A K M Shamsuddin for writing a wonderful article in your newspaper on 12 Sep 2007 under the title 'The Judiciary Reform from within' about what is really happening with our judicial system, 60 years after the British left us. The courts of Bangladesh have become a haven for evil men who take advantage of the weaknesses in the legal system.

It is difficult to imagine how a country can develop when evil men go about destroying the value system day after day, simply by manipulating the legal process.

I just hope that there would be more people like Mr. Shamsuddin who would come forward and protect this country from complete ruin.

SM Quader
Banani, Dhaka

Proactive Anti Corruption Policy

At present the crack-down against corruption is just reactive, i.e. people have indulged in corruption and that is why they are being put behind the bars. But my understanding is that PACP is essential to reduce corruption.

I am pretty sure many of the MPs were coming to parliament having no knowledge of:

(1) Why they should not indulge in corruption.

(2) What is the benefit of not being corrupt (i.e. the long-run effect). There are many other issues which need to be considered for successfully launching an anti-corruption drive.

KMA Hoque
Licentiate (Lower Doctorate) in Economics
Researcher, Economics Dept of Helsinki University

Save my sister's life

My sister got 43% burn injuries and is being treated at City Hospital, Dhaka for the last two months and a half. Her healing process has stopped. Now the doctors say that she needs to have skin grafting from a living donor--some skin (only surface of the skin which will be cured within 5/6 days, as doctors said) is required from a living donor for her grafting. Any person irrespective of sex, age, blood group can come forward to donate skin which may save my sister's life.

Contact person:
RAKIB, Mobile No. 01819469071 or 01711316714
phone: 9016528 (home).

Moshfequr Rakib
On e-mail

Don't punish them

I read the letter of Mr. M. Emad, Oxford, UK, entitled "Stranded Pakistanis" published on 13 September 2007 in your newspaper. According to him the decision-makers, who have decided to recognise these people as citizens of Bangladesh have no understanding of history. I think the writer has not read the Constitution of Bangladesh which was not framed by the present caretaker government but by those freedom fighters who fought and created a new nation to establish justice, rights of the people and democracy. These

Tale of a flood victim



Bablu Miah has again been affected by floods. He is a retrenched jute mill worker. He has lost his job. His tin-shed house, furniture, home appliances, cattle, toilet, livestock-- all have been washed away by the floods. His 12-year old son has been drowned in the heavy current of the floodwater. His wife has been suffering from fatal skin diseases. He has no work

now. Unemployment has made him mad. He is under extreme marginal conditions. Now he is passing his days un-fed, half-fed and under-fed. His physical condition is worsening.

Again heavy torrential rain and incessant floodwater have hit his last shelter---the flood rehabilitation centre run by an NGO. He has lost all his belongings. Now he is

staying under the open sky on Sirajganj Flood Protection Embankment. Flood has reduced him to a beggar. How will he survive? Where will he go? Who will give him a job? Who will give him a shelter?

Md. Golam Mostafa
Executive Officer
Prime Bank Limited
Uttara Branch
Dhaka

Scarcity of medicine

The scarcity of medicine in the country, as observed in the last few days, appears to be very artificial and the result of the manipulation of pharmaceutical companies. Bangladesh has earned its reputation for production of quality medicines and the pharmaceutical companies have demonstrated their excellence at home and abroad.

Unfortunately, the profit-earning tendency of these companies does not deserve any appreciation when we observe that the MRP increases every year almost on all products, especially on life saving drugs. Their tendency to manipulate the market by creating artificial crisis and disruption in the distribution network are major reasons for price hike as well as short supply of medicines. At least 56 companies are exporting drugs and medicines abroad and obtaining all facilities from the government.

The Ministry of Health and the Directorate of Drug Administration should come up with close monitoring of the distribution network and formulate stringent regulations on pricing and distribution. The management of essential drugs should be strengthened to provide services in case of emergency and overcome any short supply in the market.
Kumar Prithwiraj Nath
Toronto, Canada

Reopen the public universities



Our university is closed indefinitely. Everything was running very well and smoothly without any problem. Even we had started thinking of our current semester to be finished within next December. But suddenly an unexpected incident took place and changed the whole situation. It was nothing but a silly, trifling incident that occurred on the Dhaka University campus on 20 August last, and the agitation took little time to spread out among the general students all over the country. Later, the general students

came out and resorted to violence.

We hope the universities will soon be reopened in the interest of general students.

Ashis Acharjee
Dept. of English
Shahjalal University of Science & Technology, Sylhet

I am a postgraduate student of Jahangirnagar University. As students of a public university we are the most inactive people these days. We left the halls after they asked us to vacant the same. Only the students

who stay in halls could understand what it really meant. We don't know how long we will remain inactive. We are not sure whether the universities will reopen after Ramadan. A number of poor students study in these public universities. They find themselves in a very difficult situation.

The authorities concerned should immediately reopen the universities.

Munmun Roy
Student
JU