

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.

Heat wave

As the summer has set in, we are made to feel the intensity of the heat wave. In other words, daily temperature is shooting up --

each new dawn heralds in another hot day. Even we can feel the wrath of the sun early in the morning. At midday the heat becomes

so unbearable that you need something, say an umbrella, over your head. To make matters worse, the supply of electricity is being disrupted--the ceiling fans are not moving!

Much has already been written about the issue of global warming. The ongoing heat wave may be an instance of the gradual increase of world's temperature--a fallout of the climate change. Long spell of droughts, cyclones, the thawing of the polar ice-caps --all these are the effects of global warming. This year we are going through a spell of heat wave that does not show any sign of abatement. Thus what we are going through is a local manifestation of the slow increase of earth's temperature.

In this regard, the developed countries have a responsibility as they are mainly responsible for the emission of greenhouse gases. The situation calls for a dialogue between the developed and the developing countries.

However, for the time being we were waiting for the rain that could bring some relief.

Zabed Wali
Pahartali, Chittagong



Two questions

On food shortage, I humbly submit two questions--

In 1993, a remarkable limestone inscribed piece, bearing six lines of Asokan Brahmi script (3rd century B.C.) which records the occurrence of a famine in Bengal and measures taken by the Mahamatra of Pundra Nagar to meet it, was found. It is an Imperial Order to the Mahamatra of Pundra Nagar (Pudangal in the inscription) to distribute food grain and money from government storehouse to the famine affected people of the area and replenish the government store both in cash and coins (Gandakas and Kakanikas) at the time of comparative prosperity of the people. Deep sympathy expressed in the Brahmi records by the issuing authority for the welfare of its subjects strongly suggests that the order was issued by none other than the Saint King Asoka himself whose concern for his subjects, we know, was striking. The question is can we not set such an example for the future generation right now?

It is also interesting to note the following lines written by John Shore on the horrors of 1770, which was the result of a famine 13 years after the annexation of Bengal by the British East India Company

"Still fresh in memories' eye the scene I view,

The shrivelled limbs, sunken eyes and lifeless lives,

Still hear the mothers' shrieks and infants' moans,

Cries of despair and agonizing moan, in wild confusion, dead and dying lives..."

The question is should we not take all measures to prevent not the actual occurrence but rather the fear of it?

MR Hossain
Dhanmondi
Dhaka

Environment

We should show due sensitivity to the environment. Things are going wrong in many areas, but we appear to be unmoved. That's suicidal, to say the least.

Sangita Biswas
One-mail

Gas consumption

Mr. Mridha's column on the subject published by you on 22 April regrets the lack of response by industrialists on gas consumption reduction. On this subject the letter by Titas Gas asking industrial users for a six hour stoppage of gas use daily does not sound logical. It can only result in increasing specific gas usage per unit of output!

It is against any rational norm for a production process, which is geared to maximising output per unit of input--be it raw materials or energy! As an example, shutting down re-heating furnace gas burner in a rolling mill for even an hour will shoot up the specific fuel consumption per tonne of rods rolled. The similar logic is applicable for all production related activity!

Pragmatically speaking, the very idea is a non-starter to begin with; and will most probably be ignored! A better and realistic way would be to keep such units running continuously for twelve days, and shut down totally for two days, without paying any overtime. This will improve specific fuel consumption, and reduce gas usage per unit of output, benefiting both

Titas Gas and the production unit! As a special case to save gas in national interest, the labour directorate may allow continuous working of eight hours daily up to a maximum of ninety-six hours in a fortnight, followed by forty-eight hours off. This will be gladly accepted both by the management and workers. I have practised this method of work schedule while running private sector process plants; with no complaints from workers' union; without even informing the labour directorate. Both the union and the management were happy, while variable costs decreased!

S.A. Mansoor
Retired engineer, Dhaka

Women's rights

I was impressed and energized by Syed Badrul Ahsan's article entitled "Ground Realities, Bengali women, equal rights and obscurantism" in your paper.

I wonder if it would serve the

women of this country if there were a public call for a peaceful walk or demonstration. Isn't it time the women also organised themselves and acted for their rights?

How could something like that be achieved? Any suggestions?
Tanjina Quazi
Pro Women's Rights Citizen of Bangladesh

Rickshaw free capital

I strongly support the opinion and ideas of Mr. Mohammed Rahat to make Dhaka, the capital city, free of rickshaws. The mega city Dhaka is the most densely populated city on earth but the minimum urban amenities are not there. Mr. Rahat has elaborated the issue from all important angles and showed the way out. I would like to reinforce his arguments by adding the following:

Most of the existing by-lanes/lanes/roads of Dhaka city cannot be widened any more. So the only way to ease the traffic jam is to control the nature & number of transports. The first step to do this is to drastically reduce & ultimately eliminate the non-motorized vehicles. The rickshaw pullers are virtually occupying at least 50% of all roads. The rickshaws are restricting rapid movement of the motorized vehicles as well as the pedestrians who go to their workplaces on foot.

In the rural areas there is now acute shortage of labourers for works relating to agriculture and cottage industries. Migration of this unskilled manpower to urban areas is multiplying the sufferings of city dwellers as well as the migrants themselves. Eliminating rickshaws in major cities will force these people to go back to villages where they can be better used in productive activities. There they can at least breathe fresh air, drink pure water and sleep in healthy huts. The government and well off city people must come forward for rehabilitation of this poor section in the process of making a rickshaw free capital.

In cities, it is also necessary to decrease the number of private cars and increase public/private buses so that commuters can

shuttle comfortably. Movement of private cars during rush hours of the day can be controlled by imposing high parking charges and stopping unauthorized use of official transports by government & corporation officials.

We can turn to this CTG to do something to make Dhaka a rickshaw free capital, as no political government will disturb the vote bank!

Engr. Md. Aminul Hoque
Khalishpur, Khulna

Well done!

On behalf of the residents of Gulshan Model Town, I offer the heartiest kudos to the law enforcers for removing unauthorised cars from all the roads of Gulshan on the first day of April 2008. Some business companies park their vehicles in such a haphazard way in and around their billion dollar offices whole day and even at night that we, the taxpayer-residents, almost were unable to think or recall that the roads are not owned by these companies engaged in "crass commercialisation" of the "Model Town." Any complaint, grief, pain or discontent about their illegal and unauthorized parking was never entertained, rather disregarded.

But Tuesday morning was different... we were free and fearless to walk, drive and stroll to our destinations 'not restricted, by hundreds of cars. The car owners never realise that roads, driveways, pavements and footpaths belong to the residents and by not having required parking areas in their premises they were actually making unreasonable 'profit'.

We commend the act of DMP (Traffic) and assure them of our cooperation.

Tajul Islam
Gulshan-1, Dhaka

Consultation with PSC

Thanks to the DS for publishing a very important news report concerning the mandatory obligation of the government to consult the PSC under Article 140(2) of the constitution. It appears that not only the question of separation of the EC Secretariat is related to this Article of the constitution, but also the question of appointment of the 3 commissioners, and other important appointments made for the service of the Republic are included in it. I am not aware whether the appointment of the advisers is covered under this article or their provision of appointment is outside the purview of Article 140(2). I understand that the service of the advisers is also for the service of the Republic.

A reader
One-mail

EC's job

The whole country is now anxious about the stalemate in the Election Commission over the BNP's inner conflicts. There are many opinions that we get in the print and news media on how the EC could avoid or overcome the crisis. The success of EC's own roadmap is now subject to the end of BNP's leadership crisis.

What if the EC issues two separate invitation letters to two different members of the Standing Committees leading the two factions? The EC may use the same language and ask them to let the EC know when they could meet the EC officials within a given time frame. Then it would be the responsibility of those leaders to come separately or jointly. This way the EC can avoid the blame of breaking up the BNP!

I would request the EC to consider my proposal.
Imtiyaz
Uttara, Dhaka

Depoliticise public universities

In this globalised and competitive economies, a nation will be just withering away without highly skilled manpower and technological edge over others. The public universities need to be overhauled thoroughly to make these institutions effective for generating and enhancing knowledge to create skilled manpower. Public universities are on the verge of collapse, to say the least. The last BNP-Jamaat government made

public universities subservient wholly to their party interest. Appointed VCs were from among nasty party cadres having serious corruption scandals (appeared in the national dailies against some of them). These party cadre VCs still persist in some universities. The Ministry of Education recently advertised for appointing new VCs in 7 public universities where the posts are now lying vacant. Why shouldn't the BNP-Jamaat

cadre VCs be removed from all other public universities for the sake of fairness and to depoliticise all the universities before the proposed general elections on a plain field of politics. Why the BNP-Jamaat should get an upper hand in the public universities during the elections under a neutral caretaker government? Why public universities are bypassed in the reform agenda?

SAM, One-mail



PHOTO: STAR

Tale of a nation

Is there any government in this country? Everything is crumbling. The prices of essential commodities are increasing day by day, pick-pocketing and mugging have increased at an alarming rate, and the people are fed up with the number of times electricity goes off. Can't the government see all this chaos around them? Or are they totally ignorant about these facts? The government is showing its inefficiency in every way.

They have no idea about governance. All they did was to capture the corrupt politicians and businesspeople. It has done no good, rather it brought misery to the business community.

We, the citizens, do not care about who says what. We only want to live a sustainable life!

Minhaj Ahmed
Uttara, Dhaka

Cricketers fail

The debacle in Pakistan did not surprise me. It's inevitable. The ability of our batsmen is not unknown to me. The pitches in Pakistan are not suitable for the bowlers. Batsmen play the pivotal role in these pitches. Look at the Pakistan batsmen, they showed their sublime form. When they batted it looked like a paradise for them. On the other hand, the same pitch appeared to be a minefield for our batsmen. They fell like nine pins. Only Shakib & Tamim showed some resistance.

The miserable form of the captain is cause for concern. Whatever he says about the impact of the captaincy on his batting, it's obvious that it's a burden for him. Captain Ashraf has killed the batsman Ashraf! And he's not a great captain either. A good player doesn't always make a good captain, look at Sachin Tendulkar!

We only select the young players for the sake of the future but what about their present performance?

Oh! I forgot to congratulate Shakib Al Hassan for his all-round performance in Pakistan.
Solaiman Palash
East Jurain, Dhaka

Poor performance

For God's sake, stop the "Pancho Pandap" from giving any more trouble to us with their vast textbook knowledge on politics. They lack, in my judgment, the most necessary knowledge one acquires through his or her experience i.e. common sense. They have already created many controversies by their known and unknown activities surrounding the National Women Development Policy.

Now they are out to destroy our national hope of democracy through dialogue which is leading the nation nowhere. The reason I am telling this is they are neither transparent nor open minded. They are here just to pursue their fixed political roadmap. Let them explain what do they mean by "Orthobaha" election? I think it is

nothing but a hybrid model of Basic Democracy blended with religious flavour.

To finish this letter, I would urge the media not to put so much faith in the "Super Politicians" who are out to confuse the nation. They are no different from the "Pancho Pandab".

A reader
One-mail

Attacking travellers

Once again an expatriate traveller has been severely beaten and tortured at Zia International Airport. But I am surprised by the strange silence of Bangladesh media on this issue. The incident happened on April 14. The victim is a well-known humanitarian aid worker from the UK, Barrister Rizwan Hussain. He returned to the UK with a broken arm and leg. As if that wasn't enough, those elements had the audacity to force Mr. Hussain to sign a declaration admitting that he was illegally trafficking humans. Even if we accept that Mr. Hussain did something wrong, it still doesn't give anyone the right to start beating a traveller right there and then. If someone is guilty then it is the court of law that decides on the punishment.

I can't understand how an airport can get away with beating, insulting and even murdering people time and again. This is supposed to be an airport!

Bangladeshi expatriates from around the globe create huge revenue for Bangladesh. The people who work in all the airports and airlines of Bangladesh feed their families from the hard-earned money of Bangladeshi expats. Yet, when we travel to Bangladesh, the country of our origin, we get insulted and beaten by these people!

The men who did this to Mr. Hussain must pay for their crime and the government of Bangladesh must take some serious initiative to provide a fool-proof, long term solution to this culture at ZIA. Enough is enough.

Azad Miah
Oldham, UK

Power shortage

Electricity shortage and load shedding has become a black spot for the country, despite all big talks about development and other progress claims. This one failure, reported practically everyday in all the dailies, is a major problem overshadowing everything else!

Strangely, the so efficient CTG is totally silent about the power capacity enhancement programme! It seems to be the lowest priority for them. They are very busy in rationing power supplies, water supplies, rice, edible oils and all essentials of daily life!

Everyday newspapers are reporting on the worsening power supply situation, with power plants

falling like dominoes! After the CTG's initial big talks about activities on power plant repairs and revitalisation during winter months, when demand was low, now it all seems to have fizzled out, when power is needed most! They are strangely quiet on the subject now, while power plants trip and go off-line regularly!

The CTG is too busy, chasing suspect corrupts and irresponsible politicians.

They are least bothered to take any meaningful decision about the shortage of power and drinking water, while new cars for advisers are at the top of priority! It seems the common diseases of the past have rapidly infected the present powers that be! Their top priority is now buying off-season expensive rice; while ignoring its forward purchase at the beginning of the harvesting season!

In the same manner, they are keen on buying expensive new Boeings; but not critically needed power plants! How many Bangladeshis fly, and how many need power for education and healthcare, among other much needed services where sufficient power supply is a dire necessity? This simple logical fact seems to be beyond their comprehension! They seem to operate on lop-sided priorities without any care or responsibility!

An ignorant citizen
Dhaka

Our cricket



It has been a long journey for Bangladesh cricket. But it seems our performance is still the same as it was 10 years before. We try to be very confident sometimes and at times we perform very badly at the international level. As it is the

prime sport of Bangladesh, we can expect at least some fighting performances. We understand all the problems but when we see players not concentrating or playing some risky strokes when the team is in trouble, we feel

bad. When are they going to behave more sensibly?
Mahbubur Rahman (Pavel)
CARP (Contract Analysis & Resource Planner)
Melbourne, Victoria
Australia

Commuters' woes

Movement of people, especially the middle class, has become very difficult in Dhaka metropolis. An affordable transport is required to attend a marriage ceremony or to attend a social gathering with the members of the family. Majority city dwellers do not have cars. They have to depend on rented

vehicles. Taxicabs are not always available. The authorities concerned should look into the matter and take such steps as will make the commuters' lives a bit easier.

Md. Ashraf Hossain
Central Bashabo
Dhaka

