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Students going abroad

At present it is a very common phenomenon that most of the talented students of our country are keen to go abroad for the sake of a better living in the name of education. We can guess it if we see the long queues of students in front of foreign embassies. There is hardly anyone who can accomplish higher education in a foreign university because of high educational expenses. So they do odd jobs.

These students are undoubtedly talented. In my opinion, if they are determined to carry on their studies in their motherland, it will be possible to prosper here.



Shishu Park

The National Shishu Park, a major recreational centre not only for children but also for adults, has become a dull and dreary place. The park has remained unchanged since its inauguration in 1979. Very few new things have been added to it.

The authorities concerned should take note of what is going on at the park.

Nazir Sabri

Asian University  
Utara, Dhaka

Female students

It is a matter of great regret that our daughters do not find the universities a safe place. We are so unlucky. When two of our leaders, Hasina and Khaleda, were arrested the intellectuals continued to write so many articles in newspapers, but they have no time to write about girls and women in general.

A teacher facing the allegation of sexually harassing his own students loses the moral right to continue as a teacher. The so called inquiry committee is not enough. A far more discreet and determined effort is necessary to protect girls in our society.

Our façade of civility is creaking at many points!

Dr. Sakina Khanam  
Kobe University  
Japan

Treatment abroad

Khaleda demands treatment abroad for her sons, arrested on massive corruption charges. Her sons are not like the ordinary people. Their mother was the prime minister for a long time. Her claim shows that she should be accountable for miserably failing to develop the country's healthcare facilities, if we have to travel abroad for treatment.

Khaleda claims to love her country and, therefore, she personally would not leave her poor people and travel abroad for treatment. How come she repeatedly travelled abroad for treatment in the past? How did her sons transfer wealth

Taxi cab

When taxi cab was first introduced in Dhaka city in the late 90s, people thought that the transportation problem would be solved to some extent. But due to lack of proper administration, taxi cab is now a problem to the people of Dhaka city. There are many allegations against the taxi drivers. They refuse to go by the passengers' needs.

But, despite a pile of allegations against the taxi drivers, it seems that no one is responsible for monitoring the situation. What will the passengers do then?

Mushfique Wadud  
Department of English  
Stamford University Bangladesh



Good sign!

It is a matter of hope that we are going to be a middle income country. Now the per capita income of our people is 599 dollars, which is 12.5% higher than the previous years's (2006-07 fiscal year). To be a middle income country, a country should achieve the marginal level of 750\$ per capita income. The increase in GNP is good, because our country passed through some crises last year, like the devastating cyclone Sidr, two consecutive floods and economic instability. Most of the sectors performed poorly, yet the per capita income has gone up. Here remittances from abroad played the main role.

I believe we can do even better in the next few years.

G. M. Musa  
Executive, Stamford University

Imported paper

In the budget for the current year, the duty on imported paper has been reduced. But the paper mill owners have claimed that it will put in jeopardy an investment of around Tk 3,000. In the recent years, a huge amount of tax was imposed on imported papers. And the local paper mills took advantage of the situation and increased the prices of papers. And students are the main victims.

The education sector has been the top priority sector for all governments. So the government should calculate how many people will be benefited if the tax is not reduced? May be the figure will not exceed 15,000. But what is the number of the beneficiaries of such tax reduction? It may be over eight crore! So now we are ready to witness who will get preference -- 15,000 or over 8 crore!

Hasnat Ullah  
Dept. of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology  
Jahangirnagar University

Khaleda Zia and her sons

While appearing in the court on June 16, 2008 as an accused in Gato case Begum Khaleda Zia claimed that her two sons Tarique and Koko are not "faltu loka" (insignificant persons) in our society. In a society where a "personal valet" is catapulted overnight into the position of a national VIP, an alleged smuggler (now convicted for corruption) is made a minister, Tarique and Koko are certainly not "faltu loka". Begum Zia is very right to claim so. She ruled Bangladesh for ten years and has been ruling over her party BNP for the last twenty six years with the same perception. What makes the people of Bangladesh in general, and the admirers of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman in particular, sad is the way Begum Zia, after the assassination of her illustrious husband, groomed her two sons to their present shameful position. If even only 10% of the details of their activities as published in the media after 1/11 is true, it leaves no doubt in the minds of the ordinary people that Tarique and Koko did not grow up in the company of good friends and well wishers. As the sons of President Zia these two young men had no business to be friends of people like.... In the absence of their father, Begum Zia should have been more careful in grooming up Tarique and Koko.

In a democratic polity, no one is a "faltu loka" and no one is above the law. Sooner Begum Zia and our other political leaders realize this, the better.

Syed Ashrafuzzaman  
Mahakhali DOHS, Dhaka

Barack Obama

Former US Vice President and Presidential candidate Al Gore has endorsed Barack Obama. It is very significant as Al Gore is a person of great intellect, he opposed the war in Iraq, is concerned about global warming and climate change, he is anxious about the future of this planet and trying his best to do something.

He won the Nobel Peace Prize and the Oscar! How different the world would have been if he had become the president of the US, which was snatched away from him.

I congratulated Barack Obama for becoming the Democratic Presidential nominee but his speech at the AIPAC disappointed me very much. But I hope that as he is a person of great intelligence, he will act wisely if he becomes president of America.

The whole world is looking up to him to see the change he is advocating. We hope Obama will follow the footsteps of Al Gore, do everything to bring peace and stability to this world, try to bring back the good will towards America which has been lost during the last eight years, make friends not enemies all over the world by his foreign policy, so that again people will look up to America with reverence.

Nur Jahon  
Chittagong

A suggestion

Salaried people are badly bruised by an unprecedented galloping double digit inflation and skyrocketing of the prices of essential items in the last one year. Considering the misery of this vast section of people, the CTG should seriously consider increasing the present tax free limit from Tk 150,000/- to Tk 300,000/-.

Tawfik Sattar  
New Eskaton  
Dhaka

Water pollution

On an average a human being consumes about 2 litres of water every day. Water accounts for about 70% of the weight of a human body. About 80% of the earth surface is covered by water. Out of the estimated 1,011 million Km<sup>3</sup> of the total water present on earth, only 33,400 m<sup>3</sup> of water is available for drinking, agriculture, industrial and domestic consumption. Rest of the water is locked up in oceans and polar ice-caps and glaciers. Considerable part of this limited quantity of water is polluted by sewage, industrial waste and a wide array of synthetic chemicals. Various types of water pollutants are responsible for the pollution of water such as, organic pollutants including- oxygen demanding waste, disease causing waste, synthetic organic compounds, sewage and agricultural runoff oil; the inorganic pollutants including various metals and metallic compounds, suspended solids and sediments, radioactive materials etc. Water pollution is indicated by various water quality parameters such as- colour, odour, DO (Dissolve Oxygen), COD (Chemical Oxygen Demand), BOD (Biochemical Oxygen Demand), pH, temperature range, turbidity, acidity, alkalinity etc. There are many environmental effects due to water pollution.

The water-borne diseases are still a source of worry, particularly in under developed and developing countries. The quality as well as the quantity of clean water is of vital significance to the welfare of mankind.

Nusrat Jahan  
Tangail

Documents go missing!!

I was astonished to read the news report entitled "Original copy of independence proclamation missing" (June 18th DS). It is indeed a shocking revelation that the original copy of the April 10, 1971 proclamation of independence, through which the first government was formed and the March 26, 1971 declaration of independence was approved, is missing! It appears from your report that after the August 15, 1975, these documents were deliberately "lost, removed or destroyed", by the people who were in power.

Hence it appears that a nefarious approach had been taken by those people to meet their own individual goals. And what surprised me more was that successive governments have not taken any worthwhile steps at all to recover the original copy. Now that the original copy is no longer in government custody, yet, one hopes efforts can still be made to find out the original copy of the document, which acted as an interim constitution during our glorious Liberation War. We have seen the Liberation War history being distorted in the past.

We have to keep on fighting against these anti-liberation forces to ensure that the new-generation are kept well informed about our true history.

Wasif Wahed  
Old DOHS, Dhaka

The law shall rule...

"The people said to Gideon, rule over us, you and then your son and then your son's son... but he said to them 'I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you'." The Old Testament.

An inbuilt human nature is to submit readily to an earthly power or authority. Stronger humans, and arrogant governments, exploit this weakness but exceptional leaders, philosophers of freedom, activists, and sacrificing individuals have always promoted a message to the people, that neither the strong nor the absolute, or the majority will rule the people but simply laws that are just.

Democracy never evolved easily. It took numerous sacrifices and hard work of individuals to motivate people against sovereigns and authoritative governments.

The Industrial Revolution in the 19th century created greater economic opportunity in Britain. As a result, a new class of entrepreneurs, manufacturers, and merchants had emerged who opposed the absolute power of the landed aristocracy and monarchy.

Queen Victoria in the 19th century did not willingly surrender her sovereign authority for greater good of the people, but people's

Overbridge

An overbridge for the pedestrians is essential in busy roads. The main objectives of constructing such overbridge are to enable the pedestrians to cross the road safely, ensuring that no mishap takes place, creating provision for smooth traffic system, no waiting for crossing, and last of all, making life easier etc. But the truth is that many of our pedestrians have forgotten the objectives. We cannot really afford to break traffic rules on a regular basis.

Hasnat, AIUB  
Khilkhet, Dhaka



discontent led to a series of passages of Acts in Parliament diminishing her sovereign power, until a modern system of constitutional monarchy emerged during her era in Britain.

Greater economic freedom and progress permitted the common English to assert their individual democratic rights. In the same way, a better off economy will impel the Bangladesh people to claim theirs.

Presently, in Bangladesh's politics and public life, the right to criticize, or to differ, is never without the fear of physical injury or deadly threats. Political activists and prominent leaders dread to differ with their absolute bosses or even their offspring.

For those who dare to speak, the price is high and usually means an expulsion, physical terrorization, or both. Only independent but efficient courts, a well-paid police force free from political control, and an open media can guarantee the vital voice of dissent. Mere elections however widely participated, or accepted at home and abroad, will not create a secure environment where politicians and their organisations would be legally bound to tolerate dissent, or sufficiently punished when violating it.

Dr. Kamal Hussain deserves praise for saying rightly, and bravely, that he refuses to worship any political leader even if the whole country were doing so. He is the first important politician to say it, and people would one day remember him and reject the idolization of the powerful. However, improvement in economic matters is necessary to trigger a process of change in people's intellect. Years ago, Dr. Hussain paid the price when the Awami League expelled him for differing with the party chief, Sheikh Hasina.

Political reforms, as attempted after 1/11, could succeed but a deteriorating economy has become a barrier though an opportunity if rightly undertaken.

The government's benevolence, or the largest budget in our history, will not speed up economic progress unless the economy is broadly liberalised. People must be free of control and excessive authority. There must be individual economic and monetary freedom, with security fully ensured by the laws of the country. Speedy liberalisation of the economy will revolutionise every aspect of our lives, as the Industrial Revolution did for Britain and much of the world.

Price spiral is certainly controllable but not by conventional policies. Our theoreticians are firm believers in conventional economics. They ignore the 'informal' side of the economy that universities in the West, whom we follow, seldom teach, as their systems are adequately open not requiring thriving informal sectors to combat restrictive policies.

Global inflation, or the boom and bust phenomenon, will end but only when the US monetary system will collapse, or when they choose to reform it radically. Our self-doubting leaders and economists will surely wait for direction and then advocate change, not before.

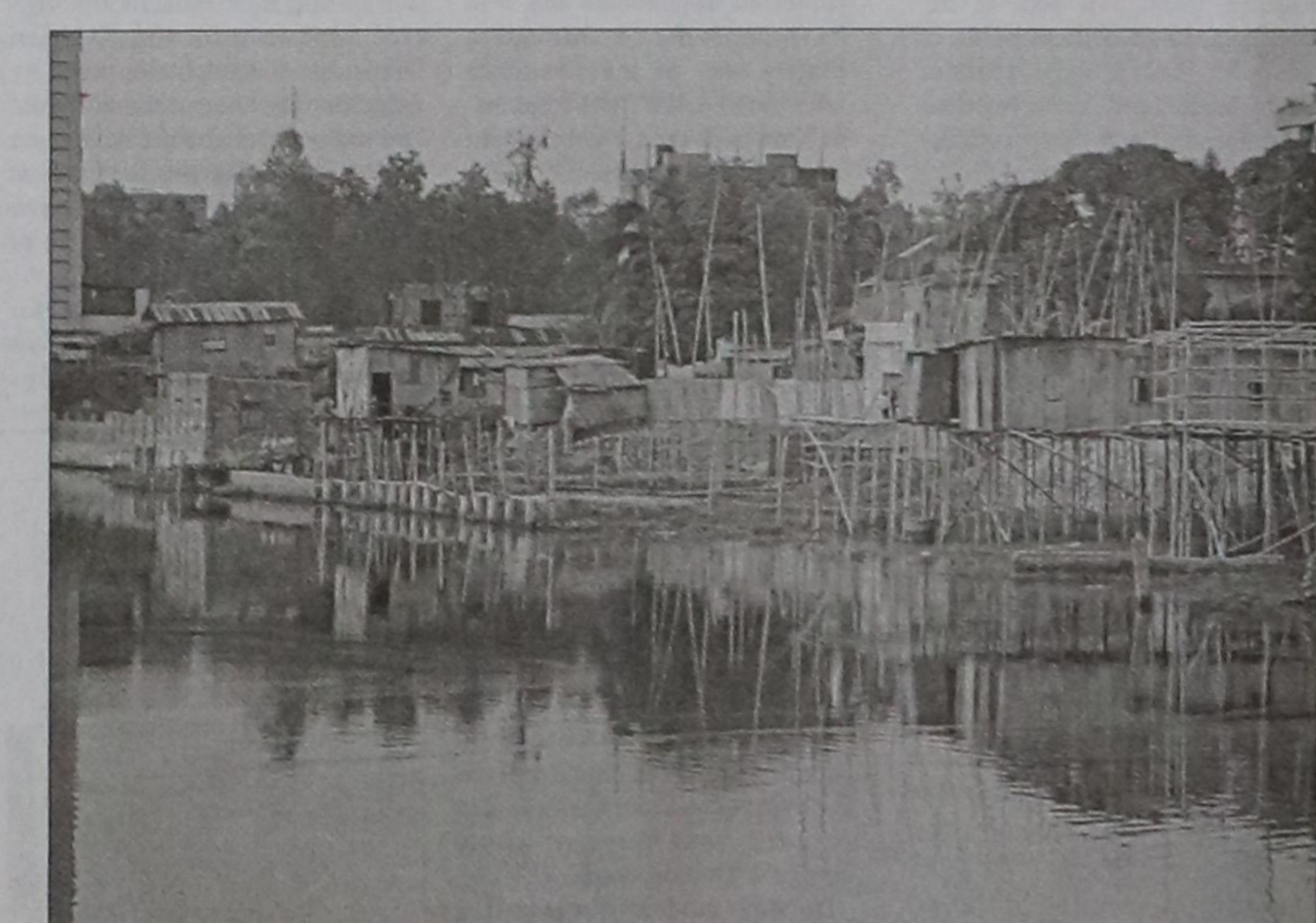
It is possible to stabilise our market prices but we need to abandon the present monetary order, or allow parallel and competing monetary systems to operate liberally and freely. But, do we have the courage to do so, or our economists the understanding about what economic laws the people want, or the country needs.

Nizam Ahmad  
One-mail

Teaching English

Whenever the education policy is discussed, English is always given a priority. At the tertiary level English is given so much importance that in almost all the universities, there is a foundation course on English. But all talks, all seminars, conferences go in vain when I notice the

Water pollution



I would like to salute The Daily Star for the June 15 news "River void of life forms" and the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology for their study on water pollution. It touched my heart and took me back to the past.

Being one of the thousands of inhabitants living in Nagari in Kaliganj thana under Gazipur district, I recall my childhood during which we saw and also used to catch fish from the rural canal connected with the river Balu! A hook and different types of small and big nets were our traditional common instruments for fishing! And there were tremendous joyous moments while we used to take a bath jumping into the canal water playing different tricks and games!

At the beginning of rainy season, our uncles and neighbours used to catch big fish, espe-

cially boal, using big fishing-spear. Once early in the morning my mother called me up from bed to see something. I was bewildered to see a very big fish. It was caught by one of my uncles.

Round the year, professional fishermen used to fish in the river and the canal. Different kinds of snails and cockles were found everywhere in the water body. The fresh water was an absolute source of irrigation during boro season.

Now finding a living being in the water is difficult. Is not our government mightier than the polluters? May we beg to them to take immediate steps to stop water pollution.

Amio James Ascension  
Monipuripara  
Tejgaon, Dhaka