essential to economic growth through increased international trade. The creation of a deep-seaport is essential.

The rule of law has to be strictly implemented by the next government if it is to take control of the country. That does not mean party cadres should get away with what they want, as that has been the case before. The next government has a point to prove to the citizens of the nation that they are secure within their own country. This will entail an increased intelligence capacity to deal with the threat of terrorism as well as a properly regulated police force not only for the urban areas but more importantly, for the rural areas.

While the garments sector is the backbone of the economy the power sector is its spinal cord. A recent World Bank assessment report claimed that Bangladesh's annual growth rate is as much as two percent lower than it could be simple because of its shambolic power sector. The current three-year (2008-11) power sector road map which was updated in May, suggested that Bangladesh's electricity demands would increase at a rate of eight to ten percent which would leave the demand at over 6000 megawatts by 2010. To put it quite plainly we are nowhere near those figures, and unless the issue is tackled with swiftness Bangladesh will become a regional non-entity. The latest release of the Bangladesh Economic Outlook, the Asian Development Bank said that worsening infrastructure constraints, especially gas and power shortages could investment and deter growth. It proved to be a telling statement as recently even the Executive Chairman of the Board of Investment (BoI) said, "The BoI has decided to discourage foreign direct investment (FDI) in gas-run industries. FDI in service sectors will be given priority." For a nation that is clutching at straws trying to attract any foreign investment, especially after FDI fell 16 percent from 2006 to 2007, this is the last problem we should be facing.



The newly elected government should move towards helping private power producers who are more efficient and cost-effective, as well as searching for new gas fields, many of which may be off the coast of Bangladesh. The Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission is operational and needs strengthening. The recent unbundling of distribution companies, and their corporatisation should bring improvements, but the next government will have to follow up on that immediately. There is also great potential for public-private partnerships in the power sector and several recent initiatives have proved to be promising, commercial losses have been somewhat reduced, a general restructuring of power utilities is underway and the prospects look bright. While this goes on there should also be a concerted effort to look into alternative energy as a way to provide basic power to many people in rural Bangladesh. Some solar power projects have proved to be quite successful and the government should analyse their results and see if a pilot project could be started up. The energy needs of the country must be met if our economy is to move forward and this is the time to act.

Everything that has been talked about so far has been rather tangible, but there are others that need immediate attention of the country which are not so easy to pin down need to be looked into as well. An enormous number of Bangladeshis are abroad as migrant workers, they send back over 6 billion dollars in remittances, more than all the aid agencies combined provide to Bangladesh yet their voices are still to be heard on the national stage. In fact their very honour is not even defended. They are regularly beaten and mistreated abroad, and even though they send back billions of dollars the government of Bangladesh does nothing about how they are treated. Non-resident Bangladeshis (NRBs) have to given better facilities such as specialised banking and counters at airports, to help the smooth flow of funds that are invested in the country; most importantly our government has to stand beside each and every citizen and help safeguard his or her human rights. The next administration has to deal with nations that mistreat Bangladeshi workers as well as inviting them (the workers) back to take part in the development of our nation. The relationship has become increasingly one-sided as we greedily accept their money but do not fight openly for their rights. This national negligence has to be addressed by the next government as a sign of good faith that they will take care of each and every citizen of Bangladesh. By simply being elected they don't have the peoples mandate, they must listen to the people and address their problems, only then will they truly gain this privilege.