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Withdraw the ban



As the Pakistan cricket team is planning to include their rebel players of ICL in the national team and India is also going in the same direction, now I feel it's high time for BCB to soften their stance and withdraw the ban on our own rebel ICL cricketers too. After all it's the question of our national pride and honour and I do strongly believe that the upcoming World Cup T20 cricket and even the 2011 cricket World Cup squad would be poorer minus the players like Aftab, Kapali and Nazimuddin. Especially, I feel

Kapali and Aftab are very talented. I think BCB should forgive and include them in our national fold. If they are given a chance to play again for the country, that doesn't necessarily depict the helplessness of BCB. Rather, these rebel cricketers should consider themselves lucky if they are called back to the national team.
Nazmus Saquib
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Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Traffic mismanagement

It seems that the government could not settle down even after 100 days in office. Government ministers are still not in grip of their ministries. One example is the chaos that is prevailing in traffic management. Is it such a difficult job to create a smooth traffic system? What has to be done is known to all. A huge number of seminars, symposiums conducted at Sonargaon and Sheraton hotels (consuming delicious food at peoples expense!) cannot produce the desired results. Enough has been said. Now it is time to act. Anyone who has lived in a western country will understand what has to be done. I have summarised some of them for the benefit of our honourable ministers, state ministers, director generals, or what have you: 1. Traffic has to be segregated, for example; in a three lane road heavy vehicles such as buses and trucks are allotted the leftmost lane, fast moving vehicles in the centre lane and overtaking in the rightmost lane. Is it so difficult to implement? 2. There is huge competition by the buses in the morning to take passengers. This may be

checked by fixing their engines so that they cannot attain speed in excess of 40 km/hour and evolving a system of staggered timings agreed upon by all bus operators. 3. It may be made mandatory for the private bus operators to run only double deckers. This will reduce the number of buses plying the roads. 4. School timings may be fixed after 9:00am, so that this traffic does not clash with office/business traffic. 5. Use of horns may be banned except in emergency cases. 6. Rickshaws may be confined to operating inside residential areas only. 7. Separate lanes may be constructed beside the pavement for the rickshaws. 8. The number of rickshaws may be reduced to an optimum level. 9. More flyovers, underpasses and foot overbridges may be constructed gradually. 10. People may be encouraged to use public transport (for that purpose public transport has to be improved). 11. Tax on cars may be increased. 12. The traffic police needs to be trained up if possible by traffic police instructors from the UK. At present they don't know their duties, that's for sure. 13. Similarly, the drivers of vehicles need to be trained about driving rules, manners

and etiquette through public awareness programmes on TV and spot checks by traffic police. At present it seems everyone in the road is participating in a dodge race where anything goes, the only aim is to go in front of the vehicle ahead! People must be made to learn that driving is a pleasure. I don't find anyone in Bangladesh waving hands to the other fellow driver as I observed abroad. I wish somebody made me responsible for this and I would implement most of the above within a week!
Farah Islam
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Relying on the bureaucracy!

Liton's front-page report of April 25, on the lack of rules for utilisation of MPs' discretionary funds is really interesting! Having been elected to parliament, why have regulation on discretion? The maximum limitation on annual basis should do. Possibly this was the logic and thinking, that discouraged the members of parliament to have any rules about it! However, under the Act, which permits disbursement of this fund, guidelines are

there about setting up rules for it. This is what has been ignored since it was introduced in parliament in 1992! Over sixteen years have gone by, and these rules were never formulated! It is now being de-facto issued by the parliament secretariat which is being followed by the Hon. Members! This is contrary to the guidelines decided by parliament! This shows that by default, the members of this sovereign body have deferred to, and de-facto accepted the rules set by their secretariat! No wonder the bureaucracy rules the roost! This should not continue any longer. It is virtually curtailing an important function of parliament and handing it over to bureaucracy!
S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Media and politics

The media, especially the electronic media, is an effective tool to shape up public opinion when society is diluted and suffering from indecisions. That is where we stand today. Against this background we are to judge the role of the media. Are they performing ethically or following the partisan mentors' directives to support or criticise the government efforts and opposition's role. I believe some electronic media outlets are sending selective information under the banner of freedom of information; and also producing talk shows which imply that Bangladesh was a "heaven on earth" before the new government came to power in early January 2009. All crises, energy, water supply, fluctuating prices of essential commodities (except rice, etc) are the failure of this four-month old government as they failed to prioritise and tackle national issues, and are spending time on non-issues like the house of the opposition leader. This type of over critical and negative presentation of the governmental efforts to address the issues are creating a demoralized state of affairs which would further aggravate the sufferings of the poor and ordinary people. My above brief is to point out that the media, print or electronic, should not be above public scrutiny while enjoying full freedom to criticize other institutions and organs of governance and social change. The media is required to be put under public scrutiny to make them feel that they are not deviating from the ethical aspects of effective journalism. I am not promoting any governmental restrictions on news or talk shows; but a need for self-censorship and responsible journalism, and to promote public confidence. By the way, please do not pay unusual attention to scoop news from the aggrieved political leaders. Their credibility is highly questionable and the media should not make them temporary "political heroes". One other thing is very important to mention here: trial of war criminals. A lot of doubts are shown by some quarters. Let us start the process. If anybody has any good suggestion, give it to the appropriate cell of the government, instead of throwing it on the air without any details. This will only confuse the public opinion and disturb the process.
Areader
One-mail

Unquotable quotes

The Reader's Digest has an old and popular page, "Quotable Quotes". In the context of Bangladesh today, we could well start with some "Unquotable Quotes" coming from our 'leaders'. I will start with the gems from the home ministry's parliamentary standing committee's recommendations on Dhaka's traffic problems as printed in DS on 27 April 09. "There is no law and regulation for non-motorized vehicles which cause the traffic jams" Do the committee members become visually impaired as soon as they sit in their air-conditioned stretched-out gas guzzling monstrosities paid for by the public? Can they not see what causes the traffic jams? It is their own vehicles and about 400,000 others occupying 75-80% of roads, footpaths, sans licenses, un-paid taxes, while travelling empty/half-empty. "We have recommended enacting a law for all non-motorized vehicles (NMVs)." The laws are already there both for NMVs and the 400,000 motorized vehicles, but where is the will to, and who will enforce these laws? "Police will fine pedestrians for not using overbridges" Are the authorities going to build another 1,000 over-bridges and perhaps 5,000kms of footpaths needed for the pedestrians in Dhaka? Will these have escalators/walkways for the old, infirm, women, children, disabled, etc? Or is this going to be a new source of income for our 'honest cops'?

"Pedestrians and NMVs are two main reasons for traffic jams". This was expected and surely coming from our new political masters (previously public servants, circa, 29 Dec 08). I am flabbergasted at this statement of imbecility that perhaps, shows the inner working of their IQ (or lack of it). I have saved the 'best' for last. "WASA water is stinking aesthetically but hygienically pure". Tell me, the Chief Engineer, WASA, how many bottles of your aesthetically stinking but hygienically pure WASA water are you drinking every day?
Sikander Ahmed
Niketon, Gulshan 1, Dhaka

Triangle of corruption

I was wondering why the BNP cadres are hobnobbing with AL cadres and following their usual aggressive style of life without any problem. I did not have to go far to find the answer. The BNP cadres have relatives in the rank and file of AL cadres. They seem to have a secret agreement that by hook or by crook they will maintain their hegemony over the hapless people. The bureaucracy acts here as the third force in the triangle of corruption. To break this vicious triangle, people must unite and make their presence felt through various constructive activities.
Tinku
Lalpur, Natore

Khaleda's house

BNP leaders fail to mention that Begum Zia has got another house, a four-storied one, in Gulshan, in addition to the Cantt. House. What more could the fawning legislators of the then ruling party do for her? One house to live in and the other for earning rent! The allotment of a house inside a cantonment, meant for a serving military officer, to her was illegal ab initio. But nobody cared! Now what has happened to the circuit house in Chittagong where president Zia was killed? The BNP gov. turned it into a museum which nobody visits as there is nothing worth seeing. So we find that the three state-owned properties have been usurped by the Zia family! Is it fair? If residential houses inside the cantonment were allotted to the widows of military officers, then very soon nothing would be left for the serving officers!

If the BNP gov. wanted to help Begum Zia at that crucial time, they could give her a house in DOHS temporarily and also grant her a monthly subsistence allowance suitable for a reasonably decent living with her then minor sons.

According to her wealth statement submitted to the ACC, she has more than Tk.3 crore and her sons are worth much more than that! My point is, the gov. should not dole out gov. money and property without ascertaining first all relevant facts regarding a prospective beneficiary. Also it must ensure that its actions are fair and just and it does not create a bad precedent.

It appears that a few days ago some people sought the reaction of the US embassy on the issue and instead of refusing to comment on a purely domestic matter, their spokesmen said they would like a dialogue on it between the parties! This is a bad case of unwanted interference.
Abul Mohsin
Siddheswari Road
Dhaka

Politicians

On 29 April, all the dailies carried an important news report under the headline "Begum Khaleda Zia, Tareque Rahman and Arafat Rahman Koko apply to the High Court for withdrawal of corruption cases" filed against them by the ACC during the caretaker government. After all, they are members of VVIP and are above the law. They cannot commit crime or indulge in corruption. During the rule of CTG, many VIPs were prosecuted, tried and some of them were sentenced to imprisonment. Many of them are now free, some of them have now been sitting in parliament, while some are bailed out. They have returned to the elite clean society once again. Some convicts are not only out of jail, they are initiating revenge plans against the ACC! So, people of this country who want to see restoration of "rule of law" are frustrated. Rule of law will never prevail in a third world country like ours!
Shafiqul Islam, NY

Sri Lankan civil war

Colombo did not allow Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt to enter Sri Lanka on a 'humanitarian mission' together with French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner and British Foreign Secretary David Miliband. I think Colombo apparently in its final days of total victory over Tamil separatist rebels (LTTE) - has taken a bold decision. The fact is that Sweden has very little influence in this region. Previous experiences show that the so-called 'humanitarian efforts' (prescribed by western arms exporting countries) in the last phase of war ultimately created more tragic situations. Quick end to the war will lessen human sufferings.
M. Emad
Oxford, UK

Rajuk's apartments

Rajuk is planning to build one hundred thousand apartments in Uttara, Purbachol, and Jhilmil project. These apartments will be constructed in eleven thousand plots. This is good news for Dhaka's citizens. However, I have my reservations about dividing open land into plots and then constructing apartment buildings. Why does Rajuk need to divide open spaces into tiny plots and then make apartment buildings? In this process we will have the same type of apartment buildings that are growing like mushrooms in Dhaka. Like the existing apartment buildings, these new ones will also not have enough air ventilation and light indoors, not to mention outdoors for recreational facilities. Instead of plots, Rajuk should arrange these new apartment buildings in large open spaces. The buildings can be made higher storied than Rajuk originally planned. This will save land and the buildings will have more spaces between them. The buildings will share common facilities like parks, playgrounds, community centres, etc. There are ample examples of such government made apartment buildings in Singapore. I mentioned Singapore because they have similar high population density like Dhaka. My second suggestion is regarding car parking facilities in these new apartments. Let us have these apartments for those families who do not own private cars. This will save precious land otherwise wasted for car parking and will also cut down prices of the apartments. Middle income families with no car will be encouraged to buy these apartments. This will also comply with the government's objective as they have expressed that these apartment buildings are for ordinary citizens of Dhaka.

The third suggestion is that Rajuk should hold a two-tier design competition in association with the professional bodies concerned. The first tier will hold a master plan competition and the second tier will involve design of individual apartment buildings. Afterwards, the government can deploy private developers to build these buildings and sell with marginal profit.
Dr. M. Zakiul Islam
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Dept. of Architecture
BUET

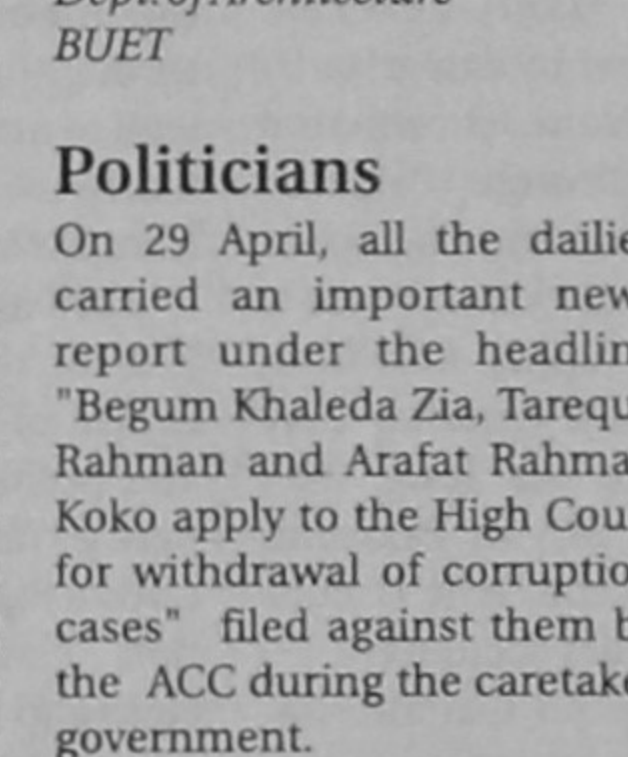
Most people in Bangladesh are poor. Mostly their votes led to the landslide victory of the Awami League in the last parliamentary election. And it is high time to do something for their welfare. A portion of the poor youth can be converted into manpower. They should be trained in professions like driving. The government may set up one driving school in each district town in Bangladesh. The young men who are poor in respect of wealth can have training in the driving profession. Some of them also can go abroad and earn money to live a relatively decent life with their families. There is good demand of drivers in western and Middle Eastern countries. In the last 38 years, the governments spent a huge amount of money for general, professional, technical and religious education which benefited the middle class and the rich people. They did not consider the well-being of the majority who are poor. But in a country of democracy, the interest of the majority must not be overlooked. We would like to look forward.

The present government must take programmes for the betterment of the poor people. When the poor will be financially solvent they will contribute to development of a prosperous society.
Md. Ashraf Hossain
Ramna, Dhaka

Driving school

Nowadays in our urban society, noise pollution is an acute problem. "Noise is the wrong sound, in the wrong place at the wrong time." Loudness of sound is a sensory dependent parameter. It is directly related to intensity of sound and measured by decibel (dB). For instance according to WHO, permissible loudness in an industrial area is 75dB and 45dB is the safe noise level for a city. Unfortunately, the average loudness of sound is above 90dB in our metropolitan cities, which is double the recommended limit. Hydraulic horn is the leading cause of sound pollution in the city. Moreover, vehicles with under performing engines, blenders, grinders, electric drills, stone and brick crushers, various types of mills, loud speakers, aircraft & trains also cause noise pollution. Let us build a noise pollution free Bangladesh.
Md. Rauful Alam
Employee
Advance IT Ltd.

Noise menace



World Cup 2011 The much-awaited news of shifting the 50 overs cricket World Cup final match venue finally appeared in cricinfo on the 28th of April. The 2011 World Cup is shifting base from Lahore to Mumbai which did not surprise us as India expects to get a "big share" of the 14 matches that were initially allotted to Pakistan. Twelve and eight matches are scheduled to be held in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh respectively. However, I have my doubts whether these two countries will be finally getting the nods from ICC to hold matches as I fear Sri Lanka will be aborted on the basis of their on going war on terror against the Tamil separatists as majority of the teams like Australia, New Zealand and the West Indies will certainly refuse to play there. And with the Bangladesh government's self declared and advertised terrorist stories on its soil, ICC certainly will look into it. The Indian Board has already started hosting meetings in Mumbai where the tournament's organizing committee will be reconstituted without representatives from Pakistan, which was stripped of its co-host status

Swine flu

Now we see the most recent pandemic disease, swine flu, threatening to reach the sub-continent. We have already seen what happened with bird flu in our country. Firstly, we have to know about the disease. This is a virus named swine influenza virus under the family Orthomyxoviridae and its notorious new strain is H1N1. This transmits from human to human. Because genetic rearrangement occurred in this subtype in swines (pig). Further ahead, we can say that pig is an animal whose genetic rearrangement occurs (mixed vessel). So in that subtype human genome is present. So it rapidly transfers from human to human. Since it has no vaccines, we have to prevent it. A few months ago I wrote an article on public health. I have shown that we have no arrangements to fight zoonotic diseases (diseases which transmit from animal to human). We need a public health team which should include veterinarians, doctors, engineers etc. But we are ignoring the issue and that can turn out to be costly.
Md. Abdullah al Mamun
Internee doctor, (DVM)
Central Disease Investigation Lab (CDIL)

World Cup 2011

this month due to the prevailing political situation in the country. The Indian Board is expected to take a decision to move the tournament's central organizing secretariat, its operational nerve centre, from Lahore to Mumbai. Apparently, re-allotment of Pakistan's 14 matches will also be discussed at the meeting. "Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are the co-hosts and out of these two, Bangladesh has only one venue to host all the matches. So obviously, India will expect to get a big share of those matches. The potential threat India will face in organizing the tournament is from the Pakistan Board which may not want to play in India, but the Indians will probably try to reschedule the Pakistan matches to Sri Lanka, so that Pakistan has no logical point to cancel the tournament. As we already know, the ICC executive board on April 17 resolved not to hold any 2011 World Cup matches in Pakistan because of the "uncertain political situation and threat of terror attacks" in the country.
Sohel Ahmed
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Old habits...

It is our habit to shift responsibilities to others. Before the December 2008 election, the present ruling party promised to the nation - "DIN BODOLER PALA" and that slogan ensured their election victory with absolute majority in parliament. Common people kept faith on their approach and got the Mohajot elected. General public gave the verdict because the activities of the past ruling parties (i.e., the BNP Jamaat Jote) disappointed them enormously. It is clear to all of us that the failures of the past government are numerous. The power sector is not an exception to it. During the period of BNP-Jamaat Jot, the power sector did not see any development or augmentation of its generation capacity. All the hazards in the power sector now being faced by the

