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## Prices of essentials

The prices of commodities increase higher and higher day by day. If the price of a particular commodity increases by a certain percentage, then it never gets back to its previous position, regardless of what is happening in the market. The price of a particular product will be estimated at the equilibrium level where the supply and demand intersect. But the prices in our country fly much higher than the equilibrium level. Greater demand and lower supply is one of the major reasons of price increase. There are also some natural and man-made causes which play their due role in price increase. Natural causes like floods and droughts are unpredictable and we need to be prepared for that. Apart from natural causes, man made causes increase the prices and a particular group of people take advantage of increasing price level. It is quite common that the prices of essentials increase in the holy month of Ramadan. Certain commodities are used mostly in Ramadan for preparing Iftar, but what's the reason behind increasing the prices of other commodities? The government has asked TCB to import several essentials which are consumed mostly in Ramadan to ensure smooth supply.

The attitude of retailers also affects the



price level, as we often see that there exists a huge difference between the prices in retail and wholesale markets which is not expected.

The govt has to play the key role in stabilising the market and eliminate the disruptive forces.

Seefat  
University of Dhaka

### An appeal to BCCB

In the World T20, the defeat of Bangladesh to Ireland was shocking as well as casting doubt on the ability of the current cricket team of Bangladesh in coping with world-cricket at that level.

And their current tour of the West Indies CONFIRMED it further that Bangladesh cricket will become a matter of fun if the BCCB remains leaning idle back on its chair. Time is ripe to do something to bring back the star players of the national team who were ousted for joining ICL, as most of the players in the current team (both bowlers and batsmen) are by no means good enough to play at that level.

Suhel  
Dhaka

### Ice to burn?

Gas hydrates look like ordinary ice crystal, and burn like many conventional fossil fuels. They are crystalline compounds formed from water cages stabilized by guest molecules such as methane, ethane etc, usually at low temperature and high pressure. One unit volume of gas hydrate provides as much as 160 volume of gas at standard temperature and pressure. Gas hydrates therefore have been considered as one of the potential energy resources. Since the 3rd decade of the last century gas hydrates have been paid special attention due to their potential to block the oil and gas flow lines. Beside the energy concern, gas hydrates show various beneficial applications such as water desalination, gas storage and transportation of methane. The sea floor and permafrost regions set optimum temperature-pressure conditions for the natural occurrences of gas hydrates. Recent reviews on the concerned subject show that more than 90 sites on the globe have been directly (experimental evidence) or indirectly (Geophysical data analysis) identified to contain natural gas hydrates. Current estimates show hydrates could contain from 10 (to power 15) to 10 (to power 17) m3 of methane at standard temperature and pressure.

Conversely, hydrates in marine sediments pose serious risk as geo-hazards; greenhouse methane gas

may decompose for any disturbance followed by continental slope instability. Outside the scientific community, gas hydrate plays fascinating roles in popular books, movies, and even mysteries, for example, ship disappearances in the Bermuda Triangle. Gas hydrate exploration programmes are underway in many countries. Notably, India and China are quickly uncovering large hydrate findings on their continental shelves. To address some of the above important issues, a wide range of fundamental, geochemical and geophysical researches have been going on to understand natural hydrate occurrences and their possible exploration to cope with the increasing demand of energy.

I don't know if there is any finding of gas hydrates offshore Bangladesh (within the energy exploratory boundary). Since this seems to be a serious issue in terms of gas blocks, energy, marine survey and many more political issues, the concerned governmental bodies should pay attention, especially, when they make contracts with oil and gas industries. Because for any possible ignorance, we may lose energy (if its strictly written as 'gas' in the contract but not as 'gas' and 'gas hydrate'), or embrace possible geo-hazards for any amateur (non-scientific) exploration.

Murshed  
University of Goettingen  
Germany

### Congratulations, Samina Chowdhury

Recently, Samina Chowdhury launched her Rabindra Sangeet album "Tomar Khola Hawa". Samina has already won thousands of hearts through the magic of her voice. As a blind fan of Samina, I hope that this album would give a new dimension to her popularity. Popular musician Bappa Majumdar also deserves credit for arranging theme-based music for her album.

Tagore's songs will remain popular for all ages to come. I have the Rabindra Sangeet albums of many singers. But this time, it is a pleasure for me to think that I will have the Rabindra Sangeet album of my

## Violation of ethnic rights

No doubt, we are a peaceful nation, and even the people across the globe recognize us likewise until they find the report in which thousands of ethnic people are stated to have been attacked by a group of musclemen. When I looked at the report, and thereby knew that some local musclemen led by one Nur Hossain Master demolished a community in which indigenous people live in, the whole thing stopped me for a while, as I was thinking about the national identity. At the same time, it was haunting me, I wanted to know the multiple answers: why did thousands of people lose their accommodation rights? Why were they oppressed

severely by the land grabbers? Why did the attackers damage and torch their homes? Where is the provision to stop the heinous crime?

Moreover, what makes the situation more dire is the do-nothing behaviour of local people and even law enforcers—meaning that the former witnessed the situation as silent audience while the latter, local police station, were busy abetting the attackers.

The administration must treat it as a critical issue and respond accordingly.

G.M. Farhad Kabir (Aabir)  
Dhaka University



PHOTO: STAR

### Digital results

The results have been digitalised. The HSC results were published on July 25. The prime minister inaugurated the process of publishing the results by clicking the laptop. It is the first year when only for the results a website (www.educationboardresults.gov.bd) has been introduced. The results were not digital but the result publishing process has been digitalized.

Though it is digitalised result, but the results were not good. It put a break on the growing developing process. The headline of all newspapers was "HSC pass rate and GPA-5 go down". The average pass rate of HSC in the ten boards was 72.78 percent but it was 76.60 percent last year. So, where is the real improvement?

Mahfuzur Rahman Manik  
Student, IER, Dhaka University

### Stop cutting trees

The news of cutting down four hundred trees around Zia International Airport has made me indignant and very upset. This is an unforgivable crime, which has been committed by miscreants with the help of some CAAB employees devoid of morality.

It takes many years to become a full-grown tree, trees are essential for the atmosphere, they help to maintain the ecological balance.

Exemplary punishment must be meted out to the criminals.  
Nur Jahan  
Chittagong

### Dangerous driving

A few days, DS printed a revealing article about the spoiled children of some of our privileged class, careening about town especially after dusk, showing off their new 'toy' with friends of both sexes and terrorizing unwary pedestrians with all sorts of gadgets fixed on their luxury cars, mostly the 'howler' horns that sounds like baneshees from hell.

It was probably one such 'criminal' that deliberately ran down a rickshaw near Kawabe-Q, off Road No 11, Banani at about 7 PM on Saturday, 08 Nov 2008. The rickshaw was carrying an elderly couple (total age-140 years) who were going home after having their annual medical check-up at the hospital on Road 12, Banani. The car came at high speed from the front on the wrong side, blinding everyone with glaring lights and deafening them with blaring horns and before the rickshaw could take evasive action, it was hit, sending the gentleman flying first on to the car and then heavily on to the road with the rear wheel passing a millimetre away from his nose. Rather than stopping, the car accelerated and sped away at even higher speed. Kind pedestrians took both back to the same hospital from where they were coming.

The lady occupant was lucky and got off with just a few bruises but the man sustained two fractures on the arm (still only 50% operative), a wrenched knee (still 75-80% operative), multiple cuts and bruises all over that bled profusely. Plastered and infirm,

he has spent nearly two months at home, away from his work, going only to the doctors, who had given him exemplary service in promptly looking after him after the accident, including ensuring that there was no damage to his By-Pass heart operation. Cost of medical treatment and earning loss has reached over six figures, apart from the pain, discomfort and inconveniences endured. At 76, he is also the only earning member.

Over the last months, we have read in the DS, that 35-40% cars do not have fitness certificates, as many, do not pay any road tax, one-third of car-owners use fake TIN numbers when buying cars and worst of all, 60-90% drivers, hold fake driving licenses. 100% cars indulge in illegal parking on roads and all use their blaring horns and lights indiscriminately. IS IT FOR THESE 1-2% UNCIVIL 'PRIVILEGED PERSONS' THAT ROADS HAVE BEEN CLEARED OF RICKSHAWS THAT ARE USED BY OVER 50% OF DHAKABASHIS?? Let the government answer these questions and remedy this anomaly, if they can. It only requires a little will and authority to rein in these elements.

Far from feeling any remorse, the dents and scratches to the car must have been repaired by now. It is a forlorn hope that the driver/owner will ever have the decency to try to make any amends. In case you have not figured it out by now, the gentleman concerned was this humble self.

Sikander Ahmed  
Niketon, Gulshan-1  
Dhaka

### Constructive criticism

Constructive criticism is very important both at individual and national levels. It is said that my critic is my best friend. It is very natural that people make mistakes knowingly or unknowingly while performing their duties and critics help them to be on the track by pointing out the wrongs. Unfortunately, we as a nation have very little power of tolerance and that's why we react very sharply to the slightest criticism we get from our opponents. The political parties show very little endurance which is of great importance in maintaining peace and harmony in society.

Our leaders hardly realise that their blunt talk and irresponsible behaviour can have disastrous impact on the people of the country.

G.S. Hossain  
Rahmatganj, Chittagong

### BNP's mistakes

This is nothing but public perception of political events unfolding in Bangladesh. The BNP has made a political mistake by not attending parliament on a flimsy ground of 'front row seats' They have now committed the most irreparable political blunder by refusing to participate in the parliamentary team that went to Tipaimukh on a fact finding mission. The non-cooperation by the opposition parties is only strengthening the hands of the Indian gov-

ernment to deal with the issue of Tipaimukh in their own way.

The negative political approach of the BNP is depriving the nation of getting the opposite views and understanding of the Tipaimukh issues from a different perspective than what the government party lawmakers would present to the nation after the visit.

What would the BNP lawmakers lose by participating and presenting their own views? They could perhaps gain more in terms of public support and fill up the knowledge gap, if any.

After the big political debacle in the last election the BNP has wrongly chosen the simple strategy not to cooperate with the government and to malign the last caretaker government with the hope of a change in the political power play. The normal way is too distant and the BNP might be further weakened politically because of internal quarrel.

I as an ordinary citizen am totally ignorant about the real impact of the Tipaimukh because our experts are yet to provide any credible picture based on the facts they have in hands. The non-cooperation at the political level and failure of our experts to provide a credible analysis of the impact of the Tipaimukh to the nation independent of any political affiliation have complicated the issue further. A peaceful solution will not be in sight unless the international community and the Indian government show a gesture of goodwill and help Bangladesh to resolve the issue.

Quadir  
California, USA

### No room for PSC members!

It is difficult to believe that the Public Service Commission building has no space for accommodating three new members thereby making the commission totally inactive to discharge its obligations. This situation will aggravate the government's plans to bring dynamism in the administration for overall development of the country.

The PM should ask the chairman of the commission to make its officials, who had apparently occupied the members' rooms, vacate the same forthwith. Unless she becomes firm with these bureaucrats, they will let her down at every step.

Abul Mohsin  
Siddheshwari Circular Road  
Dhaka

### Tigers reign supreme

Dear Tigers, congrats.....Please always keep in mind that you are the best and you can beat any team in this world no matter who are they. Because to get a batsman out it needs only a good delivery, but to make a hundred it needs minimum 17 balls if the batsman hit all the boundaries.

Never think whom you are playing with, just think you are playing cricket with another cricket playing team! Md. Asfath Ullah (Siyam)  
BBA  
Khulna University

## Role of ICT

Finance Minister AMA Muhith has stressed the role of ICT in creating a corruption free country while speaking at a seminar in Sylhet on Digital Bangladesh. He raised different issues and sectors that can benefit through creation of a digital country. Though it is a bit late, the initiative taken by the minister is appreciable. It will be wise for all members of parliament (MPs) to follow him and arrange similar seminars and workshops in their respective constituencies or regions. The seminars and workshops should be held in local institutions like schools (general, vocational and madrasah), colleges, institutes and universities. Not only the students and teachers will attend but the local people must be invited and encouraged to attend the events. The most important thing is to raise awareness among common people about the benefits of ICT which is the main tool for a digital country. Once they make up their minds to take such initiatives, experts from the respective regions will come out to cooperate and to lead the programme further. They can be termed as the hidden human resources for the region. Their expertise can be utilized for the welfare of the localities.

Like other high officials, some of the respected MPs may not be well aware of ICT applications. It does not matter much and they don't need to feel shy, because this is the normal practice even in the developed countries as confirmed by technology experts and researchers of those countries. As a senior citizen and professor of ICT, it is my request to all our MP—just get a practice of playing with

the keyboard of a computer with your grandsons or granddaughters and you will learn through playing. You will discover a new world of knowledge and then feel what blunder you did, not learning earlier. It is really a very powerful tool even in maintaining your personal secrets. It enhances all sorts of activities and it is a tool for all pervasive solutions.

In the middle of 90s, the Commonwealth adopted similar programmes in many of their member countries including Bangladesh through empowerment of the policy makers, decision makers and other senior officials with ICT. It was too early for the politicians to realize the importance of ICT at that time. As such the programmes could not be continued for a longer time. The same programme we can start with some modifications according to present needs. Courses of short duration in ICT department of any university under the auspices of some senior professors can be organized. During the course, senior participants will surely learn and enjoy like the young students.

It is a question to most people how ICT can remove corruption from society. Transparency and accountability can make things possible. ICT is a tool to keep records of good as well as bad activities. People involved in any kind of crimes or corruption are bound to surrender to the technology experts because technology can detect them.

Science based technology is the most effective tool for alleviating human sufferings and meeting basic human needs. Science gives us the power to understand



nature and enables us to assist others. For the affluent societies, science and technology produce more economic gains and comfort in peoples' lives. But the science based technology changes are so fast that only highly qualified workforce with research and training in respective fields is able to evaluate and modify such technologies for local use. For a country to be competitive, most citizens must be able to apply science and science-based technologies, and some must know how to create new scientific knowledge. The respected MPs can play vital roles in science and technology based development in their respective areas if they empower themselves attending a short training programme as mentioned.

Technology, largely practiced by the males, has become gendered towards the male's perspectives and needs. Women have less scope of making significant inputs to scientific and technological developments in the developing countries like Bangladesh. They are often deprived of benefits accruing from developing technologies, and their existing status may even be worsened by technological innovations, so it has become very essential that women be well grounded in these areas in order to enhance their roles as mothers, social educators and transmitters of ideas from generation to generation in the emerging digital Bangladesh.

Prof. Lutfor Rahman  
Former VC and freedom fighter