

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.

Indo-Bangla relations

With unalloyed support for independence and strong opposition against the barbarism committed by Pakistan in 1971, India, no doubt, contributed much to the establishment of Bangladesh, showing great neighbourly approach to the war-tainted people of the latter nation. With the passage of time, the relations, however, between the two countries have been termed as a 'complex' one, as there has been fluctuation, if not bitterness, between them.

Bangladesh, being almost entirely encircled by India via a land border stretching 2400 kilometres, considers its relations with India to be vital for political and economic reasons. During Mujib government the relations with India were at the peak but with the fall of the government mentioned, bilateral issues concerning the interest of the two neighbours, slowly but surely, started experiencing, in most of the cases, dissatisfaction. Issues such as South Talpatti Island, the Tin Bigha corridor and access to Nepal, the Farakka Barrage and water sharing, border killings and the construction of a fence along most of the borders gave birth to mutual misunderstanding. But the issues never turned extremely serious.

In recent years, India increasingly complained that Bangladesh does not secure its border properly, though many small pieces of land such as Padua, a part of Sylhet division, and South Talpatti Island, belonging to Bangladesh along the border region are still under Indian military occupation. However, India fears an increasing flow of economically depressed Bangladeshis to its territory and it accuses Bangladesh of harbouring Indian separatist groups like ULFA and alleged terrorist groups. India estimates that over 20 million Bangladeshis are living illegally in India, which has no reasonable footing. The Bangladesh government has consistently denied these accusations.

Tipamukhi barrage 'issue' has recently been a much talked about topic and managed to cause a hue and cry, for it is entirely concerned with mutual interest. The Indian government has planned to construct a controversial dam and a barrage on the upstream of the trans-boundary river Barak, with the intention of stopping the flow of water to Bangladesh which will, no doubt, cause a devastating effect in the latter nation. Bangladesh water experts, environmentalists, politicians and people in general protested the move in a peaceful manner. But their counterpart seems paying no heed but showing 'Big-brotherly' attitude, making the issue worse.

On top of that, Indian High Commissioner Pinal Chakrabarty has not only undermined the people concerned for their opposition to construction of the barrage but also termed 80 percent of the Bangladeshis seeking Indian visa as 'touts and bro-

kers' at a conference in Dhaka. Regrettably enough, he delivered the highly objectionable and arrogant comments in front of high officials including the foreign minister herself with no protest.

Diplomatic relations among nations can never be developed blowing hot words and showing a 'Big-brotherly' attitude. If diplomats create a gap, who will bridge it?

Sarwar Hussain

Dept. of Computer Science & Engineering
University of Chittagong

Transport problem

At present there are eight double-decked buses for the students of JNU. But these are not enough for the students.

So, the students have to waste their money and valuable time using public transport.

We request our Honourable VC to take necessary steps to solve the transport problem in order to mitigate the sufferings of the students.

Md. Anamul Hoque

BBA
Department of Finance
Jagannath University, Dhaka

Mobile phone

The necessity and popularity of mobile phone, makes it part of our daily life. People mainly use this handy device for the purpose of communication.

But now it has become a popular medium of entertainment too, as some advanced technology like MP3 player, mega pixel camera, video recorder, Internet connection etc have been added to it. Especially, the young generation or teenagers show much interest in such mobile phones.

"One wonders what is the recognition, designation and status of these letter writers in our society, in our day to day life?

Can't a letter writers be regarded, accepted and respected as freelance journalists?

Would our learned readers, writers, editors, journalists, intellectuals and think-tanks and members of the public kindly enlighten us with their valued suggestions and opinions on the matter?

OH Kabir
Wari, Dhaka

Diplomats

Bangladesh, being a third world country, other nations' influence is always predominant here. As we need financial help from the developed countries to finance our development works and to build infrastructure, it is necessary to look forward to them for help. Because it is not possible to run development works with our limited resources. Consequently, taking the chance foreign countries' representatives meddle in our internal policies.

An ambassador has admitted in the media that they wanted change (1/11) and emergency to be promulgated.

Politicians should be able to address the problems directly and refrain from creating a situation where their own role is marginalized.

Zonae Emran
MSS student
Dept. of Political Science
University of Dhaka

Administrative reforms

The Awami League govt has initiated a number of sector-wise reforms. The prime minister in keeping with her election pledges has already announced that Rangpur would be the next division. It is only decentralization that can improve the socio-economic conditions of our people. It is only natural that for all practical purposes all the five southern districts namely Faridpur, Madaripur, Rajbari, Shariatpur and Gopalganj be incorporated within the fold of Barisal Division. This would minimize the sufferings of common people who have to travel all the way to Dhaka for legal and administrative purpose.

It is simply not understood why an individual should travel from outlying upazilas

to the city for legal and administrative purpose.

It is simply not understood why an individual should travel from outlying upazilas

Let's not be biased

I could not help but notice the letter by Mr. Sikander Ahmed in The Daily Star on August 14, 2009 and honestly, I can't say that I am surprised. As I have previously seen on many occasions his letters here that ONLY support the existence of rickshaws in Dhaka city roads.

The fact of the matter is, (I am absolutely sure) that everyone in Dhaka city will agree that rickshaws being an extremely dangerous form of transport and which is very degrading to the puller is one of the MAJOR causes of Dhaka city's traffic jams. But I of course realize that Dhaka has a lot of vehicles on its roads that are actually more than it can handle. Besides, our traffic control system is barely under any system at all. There are almost no traffic signals in use and low number of traffic managers make it almost impossible to control traffic in a systematic manner. Surely, the rickshaw pullers don't make life easy for the poor traffic officers.

I understand that we cannot simply stop rickshaws right away and ban them in Dhaka all together, all of a sudden.

But, careful, impartial, and responsible thinking will make us see that unless we begin to think seriously on ways to bring and end to the rickshaw era, we run the risk of a breakdown of our entire transport system. Rickshaws are well on their way to take over the city's every corner. Any reasonable person will agree that if it was not for banning rickshaws on Mirpur Road, it would be IMPOSSIBLE for anyone to move on that road today. But do people like Mr. Sikander see it? I request him and others alike (I am sure not many out there) to please start to think about the future and be responsible towards our children and their lives. Do we really want to leave them to the anarchy of these 'careless and unruly rickshaw pullers'?

Let me once more be absolutely clear that I am not against the rickshaw puller (the man). I am against the idea of man pulling this completely outdated inhuman object while others sit back and treat him like an animal. If we truly care for these people, then we will begin right now to think how to get them out of this miserable life and in turn help make our roads free for traffic movement that is suited for the year 2009 and beyond.

Let us all be IMPARTIAL and think deep. PLEASE!

Rahat
Malibag

Dhaka

Tax collection

Bangladesh is developing itself through thick and thin although many of us are not satisfied with our pace of growth from 1971 onwards. As we are famous for deficit budgets, we need assistance from international banking giants like WB and IMF. We have seen their suggestions for governing our state which in many cases have stood against our collective interest.

The financial institutions have a bad track-record of destabilizing many economies through political channels. If we want to control our own affairs, the only way will be creation of lots of internal sources of finance. Levying tax is one of the ways of internal financing. Many sectors are not bearing the yolk of taxes. Land owners in the city of Dhaka are out of tax network. Most landowners don't pay any taxes. If tax is levied from these moneyed landowners properly, it will add a huge amount of currency to our public coffer. In order to minimize the gap between the rich and the poor, taxes should be levied more on wealthy individuals. To materialise this, the govt. must expand the function of the tax department to rural areas.

A tax friendly mentality needs to be created in our society. We should boycott tax evaders in all sectors.

Mostafa Kamal Molla

Dept. of English
Haji Mohsin Hall

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Bogra

Minister's position

What is more disquieting now for the city dwellers than the fraught traffic jam? And it is not beyond the knowledge of the Communications Minister. Horrible, from Shyamoli to Gulistan, a path of 4-5 kilometres and a journey of half an hour at best took two hours by bus. The other main thoroughfare, Old Airport Road, especially from Jahangir Gate to Sheraton Hotel always sees the dead jam that many times the DS brought to the notice of the authorities through vivid pictures. But it is quite disheartening and dismaying that the new government with over six months in office could improve upon nothing in matters of traffic management, nor it is observed to be wrestling with the problem to reduce the commuters' awful plight.

We only heard some words 'monorail,' 'underpass,' flying in the air, but not a single instance or bit of 'doing something' in this sector did we notice so far. But there is no end of daily addition of vehicles on the same streets with not a single inch being added to, only to make things worse. Whereas the Communications Minister's first meeting with the Engineers of Roads & Highways and DCC/Rajuk should have been to sort out this single but major issue and thrash out what road infrastructure could be built soon, either flyovers, monorails or underpass or metro system, considering their feasibility, cost benefit and time (no over ambitious plan that takes a decade). If that has been done where is the groundwork? To get rid of the 'hell' we have no alternative but to plunge into doing the same on top most priority taking into account both alternatives, how fast we can build the system and how that could be implemented/achieved. The Hon'ble Minister seems to be more interested and busy with the bigger/biggest enterprises like Padma bridge and the road infrastructure of inter-districts.

It would not be out of place to mention here that Kolkata had no flyover in 2000 when I first visited the city and I saw 12 flyovers almost completed when I visited it in 2006 the last time, and what a pity during this time we could build only two. Either jump into building flyovers or underpass on the merit of 'which gives early solution,' or scrap further influx of cars/buses on the streets. Let us walk to our destinations by the pavement, but do not force us to walk on the tailing cars making long lines due to all time gridlocks or snarl-ups.

Ahmed Niaz
Shekhertek
Mohammadpur, Dhaka

Admission trade

The success in making an educated nation lies in the ability to offer free access to education, both at the intermediate and higher level. In our country, though we need to get the nation educated, the situation is bad for a number of reasons. One of

those is paramount and poses a grave threat to the whole education system—that's admission trade. During admission season, our national dailies' headlines become replete with the news where we get the real picture of admission trade in which the student wing of the ruling party takes the position of market leader. Worse still, the trend is getting worse with the passage of time and the amount of bid depends on the status of the educational institution for example, while Dhaka College hoodlums demand Tk 50,000, in Sylhet or local districts the amount is Tk 15,000-20,000. Maybe not all young politicians are involved in this virulent practice, but it undermines the education system as a whole.

The financial institutions have a bad track-record of destabilizing many economies through political channels. If we want to control our own affairs, the only way will be creation of lots of internal sources of finance. Levying tax is one of the ways of internal financing. Many sectors are not bearing the yolk of taxes. Land owners in the city of Dhaka are out of tax network. Most landowners don't pay any taxes. If tax is levied from these moneyed landowners properly, it will add a huge amount of currency to our public coffer. In order to minimize the gap between the rich and the poor, taxes should be levied more on wealthy individuals. To materialise this, the govt. must expand the function of the tax department to rural areas.

A tax friendly mentality needs to be created in our society. We should boycott tax evaders in all sectors.

Mostafa Kamal Molla

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Water-logging

Water-logging is now a common problem in Dhaka and Chittagong cities during heavy downpour in every monsoon. These two cities have experienced severe water-logging for the last decade or so. Even a little rain causes a serious problem for certain areas.



Development Authorities (like as RAJUK, CDA) are responsible for water-logging in the two cities.

Despite torrential rainfall (420.4 mm) on July 27-29, the port city experienced for the first time an amazingly less water-logging this year than ever before. For this

remarkable improvement, city dwellers have given credit to the CCC's extensive renovation works including dredging and widening of the existing 144 canals for the last eight months. Because of canal digging and eviction of huge illegal encroachments people didn't confront of water-logging this year.

Like Chittagong, Dhaka City Corporation and the authorities concerned should take proper steps to restore canals and wetlands. Beside this, it needs proper recycle management, because polythene and similar substances are creating an unnecessary hindrance to flow of water through insufficient drainage system. Above all, there should be a comprehensive storm water drainage improvement plan to overcome the water logging problem as well as its environmental consequences.

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Dowry

Digital

Bangladesh

DB

implies a science-based Bangladesh where all activities of governance, commerce, education, health etc. will be processed by information technology. The election manifesto of the Bangladesh Awami League pledged "Vision 2021", i.e. a vision to build a Digital Bangladesh by the year 2021, the year of the golden jubilee of the independence of Bangladesh. This visionary approach of AL's manifesto is considered one of the major factors that attracted a large number of young voters to vote for AL-led grand alliance. Now the making of a ICT-driven society in Bangladesh is a real possibility.

Admission

trade

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A 'digital country' can have different meanings but generally speaking it would mean an ICT-driven knowledge-based country where all national information and knowledge are available electronically and on-line and where people get a better life from crime, corruption and misrule.

Digital

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