



Dealing with corruption

1/11 in 2007 was the high antibiotic to the root of corruption in Bangladesh. Although it was the duty of the caretaker government to hold election but they first tried to eradicate corruption from the country to make it free and fair. It gained popularity among the common people but uncommon people who had piled up illegal wealth could not accept it. Many costly cars were found on the road without any owner and many were running towards unknown destination. Every day we got surprising news. Many high-profile politicians, businessmen and service holders were arrested. It was unimaginable and unpredictable. We thought the antidote was working to root out corruption from society. Practically, the antidote started to work properly. But suddenly the dose was stopped and some advisers reportedly became corrupt. Consequently, it started to react. It was very unfortunate for us. The main reason is that the caretaker government could not finish the required doses.

We know once a patient starts to take antibiotic he/she has to complete a

certain course, otherwise it reacts severely and the patient may even die. As the caretaker government could not finish the antibiotic course, so corruption has taken a serious turn. It is very difficult to find a sector where there is no corruption.

Dr. Yunus, recipient of Nobel Prize, advised the caretaker government to set up one instance to teach millions of corrupt people. Unfortunately, no instance was set up. One by one high-profile arrested persons got released from the cases, although we had seen many evidences of corruption. But finally we came to know that corruption could not be proved due to lack of proper evidence.

It is difficult to eradicate corruption from our country only by making law or by-laws without wholehearted participation of all. May I request all the political parties, if they really love the country, to join together forgetting all differences and take the vow to eradicate corruption from our society.

Nirmal Singha Chowdhury
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DMP's hi-tech toy!
The Ds of 16 Aug 09 informs us that Dhaka Metropolitan Police are installing an 'intricate Tk 61 crore control room with C3S, 155 CCTV cameras and 31 dot matrix displays at important intersections' that 'will curb street crime and traffic congestion'. Could the DMP inform us, ignorant plebeians, how it will do so?

1. Will it show a lady being mugged a km away and if so, how will the police get to her before the muggers decamp with the booty? Do they have helicopters also, because it is certain they themselves will be stuck in a traffic jam? Ditto for dacoity, armed robberies, extortion (by cadres and police alike), tender snatching, drug dealings, fire etc etc. 2. What good is it if a man stuck in gridlock is shown there is more ahead?

3. Since when did Brunei achieve expertise in I/T based traffic control?

4. What has the commission earned from the deal?

5. Since such hi-tech mumbo-jumbo installed previously have had a very short life, how long before expensive repairs are necessary to keep the 'commission' ball rolling?

6. What is the expected longevity of the system 61 years, 61 months, 61 weeks or as I expect 61 days before most of the CCTV cameras and dot matrix displays find their way to Dholai Khal. Have the DMP already signed a buy-back agreement with them?

7. Will someone be keeping account of the 4 lakh stretched-out Gas Guzzling Monstrosities occupying 75%

of the road, travelling empty/half empty or parked illegally on the road; that is the most obvious cause of gridlocks in Dhaka?

Tk 61 crore is a lot of money to spend for a bunch of cops sitting in a control room playing computer games. Would not this handsome sum be better spent repairing at least 61,000 potholes and roads, streets, lanes and by-lanes in Dhaka? I suppose the orthopaedic practitioners would never have forgiven them!!!

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Swine flu and Bangladesh

Swine flu is a highly contagious respiratory disease in pigs caused by H1N1 viruses. It can be transmitted to humans via contact with infected pigs. This disease was first reported in Mexico. Now according to World Health Organization (W.H.O.), H1N1 influenza had been laboratory-confirmed in 41 countries and more than five lakh people have been infected and around eighty people have died.

Recently, twelve people have died in India. So far around 200 swine flu-infected patients have been identified in Bangladesh. To prevent the outbreak of swine flu government should arrange training programmes for the health officials. A good number of Bangladeshi workers from Malaysia, Abu Dhabi, Saudi Arabia and some other countries are returning home every day following the global economic recession. But many of

them are not aware of the healthcare desk.

So, we should take necessary steps to raise collective alertness.

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Two leading English medium schools in Dhaka city have shut down for an indefinite period amidst fears that the number of swine flu cases might increase in the country. Experts, however, said the swine-flu situation in the country does not warrant such drastic steps. Swine flu was noticed first in 1918 and that time it was called Spanish flu, which had spread globally killing over 50 million people in various countries. A lot of panic has been created in the last several days after couple of people tested positive for swine flu in Bangladesh. The latest about swine flu infection in Bangladesh is that the number of reported cases has gone up to 87. Of that number, 32 have been fully cured and the remainder receiving follow-up treatment. Reports from neighbouring India speak of the affliction widening, and an alert was declared in the Indian states. There is no cause for people to go into panic mode. Following media reports, the people's panic has been caused by ignorance and it is unnecessary. There is no need for them to wear facemasks. The situation was creating more panic than the actual ground reality. For an example, doctors and experts

Madhupur forests

The forest department recently planned to begin new plantations with exotic mahogany, eucalyptus etc in Madhupur. Though it's good news but the new exotic kinds of plantation would cause great loss to our own tradition of Madhupur greenery.

The matter deserves a closer look.

Mahmud Ali Kabir
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Daylight saving

We find little justification of putting the clock forward by one hour from the 19th July for three months, for the first time in the history of this sub-continent, on the ground that

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while addressing a seminar said that in India two people die of tuberculosis every three minutes, 6,301 die daily due to heart trouble.

While diabetes claims the lives of 2,740 daily, about 290 people die due to tobacco-related diseases every day. So no panic should be created over influenza A (H1N1), which is just one of the many viruses in the environment. One worrisome dimension of the swine flu situation is that it's at level 2 now inasmuch as several cases have been detected in the community via cluster identification. It is now for the people to come forward to inform the health professionals with any symptom of flu they have contacted, besides, of course, maintaining personal hygiene meticulously.

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Power generation

Bibiyana 450mw power project was planned considering the availability of gas in Bibiyana gas field. It is an IPP project. But it is in the process of tendering and re-tendering during the last couple of years. It should move in the fast track to start construction without any further loss of time.

For construction of power stations the tendering process is so complicated and cumbersome that complaints, counter-complaints and transparency question make it unduly lengthy. The tendering process for power station work should be straightened and the matter decided by a high-powered committee.

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Letters to the editor

It is a matter of utmost concern that many industrial units in the country keep releasing toxic gas and chemicals into the environment, to the peril of human health, crops and aquatic resources. What is supremely ironical is, while the owners of these industrial units as responsible citizens contribute significantly to the growth of the economy and generation of employment opportunities, they prefer to remain indifferent to the vital issue of environmental pollution and the resultant damage to eco-system.

It is mainly industrial pollution which left the rivers of Dhaka city biologically dead, as 60 percent of the total effluents dumped in the rivers are industrial wastes while the rest are household wastes.

Pollution of the city rivers has reached such a level that the groundwater system, where aquifers are recharged from riverbeds, is also being contaminated. Although the Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act (ECA) clearly prohibits pollution of rivers, and makes it mandatory to set up Effluent Treatment Plants (ETP) for certain categories of industries, but no success has been seen yet. According to the Department of Environment (DoE) statistics, there are around 7,000 industries in and around the capital, around 200 of which have ETPs, but many of them do not use the plants in order to maximize profit by cutting the cost of running those.

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According to the Environment Conservation Rule 1997 under ECA, every industry of certain categories must have in-house ETPs, otherwise they would not get environmental clearance from DoE, which is mandatory for getting power and gas supply.

The pollution that has set in the rivers Buriganga, Turag, Balu and Shitalakkhya has made it almost impossible to treat their water. The overall situation suggests it could not be any graver. Repeated notices of the DoE protests from environmentalists, warnings from environment experts, and the High Court's directives for the government to stop pollution of rivers -- nothing could restrain industrialists from their vile practice of dumping effluents in the rivers.

While industrialization is necessary to boost our economy and create employment opportunity, it is equally essential that factory owners obey the laws and install protective measures of international standard.

It is time for the relevant ministries and departments to enforce anti-pollution laws, especially in the industrial field. It is at the time of issuing licenses for industries that the applicants should commit themselves to stringent environmental criteria before they are authorized to set up units. Then, there should be oversight bodies to monitor their performance from time to time.

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MUNEM WASIF / DRIKNEWS

Industrial pollution

it would save day light hours and thereby minimize frequent loadshedding. But so far it has made no difference.

If at all it was necessary for them to do so to give us a surprise, then they should have advanced the office timings by one hour. It was as simple as that. Only Allah knows when the experiment will be over and the authorities will change their mind. It has created confusion among the people, particularly in the rural areas. Bangladesh is supposed to be a tiny country according to her size. Whereas, India is considered as a subcontinent because of her enormous size but they are content with one set of timing, though setting up of separate time zones would have been logical. Moreover, variations of time between day and night in this part of the world are not that significant.

I shall request the concerned authorities to immediately relocate the Kamalapur Railway Station outside of the main city, preferably Tongi. The existing railway track from Banani to Kamalapur should be developed as a national highway. This will provide the city dwellers with an alternative road and help remove traffic congestion to a great extent. Construction of flyovers and overbridges will not be necessary and many link roads may subsequently be opened.

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Addiction

"My life has got no meaning now. I am undone, I can't stop him," she wept. She is an unfortunate mother, who lost her husband 15 years ago and is now looking at a photograph of her addicted son. It is 1:00am and he is out of home taking Tk 1,000 from her mother. He asked her to give the money but when she told him not to take drug again, he got short tempered and demolished the television and some expensive furniture.

Many families are facing such problems. There should be a social movement against drug addiction.

Istiak Ahmed Raihan
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Extra judicial penalties

Thanks for your editorial on the above topic. We need to study Islamic history. Lots of archaic laws from Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern societies have come to this country in the name of Islam (which have nothing to do with the religion itself) and these are mostly enforced on the poor and weak sections of society.

Surprisingly, the oppressors are not identified by Mufitis and Khatibs of the Islamic Society of Bangladesh.

Dr. Azizul Karim
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End of an era

The death of Edward Kennedy brings to an end the era which started with John F. Kennedy. I was a child when John F. Kennedy was elected

President of the USA. My father was then in the Home Ministry and he used to bring booklets distributed by the then United States Information Service (USIS) at Topkhana Road. I was looking at the pictures in the booklets when my father saw this he explained to me about John F. Kennedy and a country called the USA. To me Kennedy, meant the USA and the USA meant Kennedy. When my father told me in November 1963 that President Kennedy had been assassinated tears had rolled down my eyes.

The Kennedys were of Irish origin; Kennedy's grandfather migrated to the USA from Ireland when famine like conditions were sweeping through Ireland. Kennedy's father Joseph Kennedy Sr. once served as the American Ambassador to the UK. From then on the Kennedys were putting their stamp on the USA by serving for the country. Joseph Kennedy Jr. (the eldest of four sons) was an air force pilot in World War II when the bomb he was carrying accidentally exploded in mid-air and he died. His brother-in-law Sergeant Shriver also died in the war. President Kennedy also saw action in World War II. His ship P.T. 109 was sunk in the Pacific Ocean by the Japanese. Though, he himself was injured he carried another injured seaman to an island along with his shipmates. They were rescued from there by another American ship through the help of a native.

John F. Kennedy became President at a young age and his brother Robert Kennedy became Attorney General. Edward Kennedy then became a Senator occupying the seat vacated by his brother. Surprisingly, the oppressors are not identified by Mufitis and Khatibs of the Islamic Society of Bangladesh.

President Johnson was forced to actively join the Vietnam War by Defense Secretary Robert McNamara (who was later to become the President of the World Bank). As more and more Americans were being killed in the Vietnam war, the people of the USA raised their voice against American participation in the war. Robert Kennedy virtually forced President Johnson to state that he would not seek a second term in the office. Robert Kennedy, a presidential hopeful was assassinated while he was campaigning in the primaries.

Senator Edward Kennedy also had his dream for the White House but it was unfortunately marred by the Chappaquiddick affair. Senator Edward Kennedy championed the cause of Bangladesh in the USA while the then American government was supporting the Pakistanis. Senator Edward Kennedy also came to Bangladesh in 1972 and delivered a speech at the Dhaka University. Bangladesh should have officially mourned his death by hoisting the flag at half mast on his burial day.

During the final nomination of the democratic contender for the presidency, Senator Edward Kennedy lent

his support to Barack Obama and this support went a long way in bringing Barack Obama to the White House.

The death of Senator Edward Kennedy closes the chapter of the Kennedy era and fame, as none of their children are in the political limelight.

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Caretaker government system

The issue of caretaker government system came to the fore when AL secretary general Syed Ashraf Islam talked on this matter recently. He commented that we have to reconsider the caretaker system in the light of recent incidents and its acceptability in present context. I think this is a issue related to democracy.

Well, the caretaker government was first introduced in 1991 election, in the aftermath of the overthrowing of the autocratic Ershad regime. Then Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed assumed the position of the caretaker govt chief. The election held under that caretaker govt was believed to be one of the best- fair, free and transparent. The election paved the way for reintroduction of parliamentary form of democracy. The BNP formed government. Then in 1994, by election was held in Magura where election manipulation and election rigging took place under the sponsorship of the ruling party men. The election made the political parties infuriated. Since then the political parties showed lack of enthusiasm to take part in elections under the BNP government.

However, whichever political party assumed state power, it weakened the Election Commission and in 2006 the BNP govt went one step ahead selecting a loyalist as the caretaker govt head and the political situation became uncertain. It also paved the way for the military backed caretaker govt to take over.

The caretaker govt is a unique system in our country and it is not found anywhere in the world. The caretaker govt system could not be a permanent system and faith must be reposed in political parties.

To give democracy an institutional base, democratic institutions have been revived and strengthened and no political party should weaken the institutions. The Election Commission has to be given freedom as stated in the constitution, so that it can work impartially and without fear and favour.

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Agriculture sector

We know that most Bangladeshis earn their living from agriculture. Although rice and jute are the primary crops, maize and vegetables are assuming greater importance. Due to the expansion of irrigation networks, some wheat producers have switched to cultivation of maize which is used mostly as poultry feed. Tea is grown in the northeast. Because of Bangladesh's fertile soil and normally ample water supply, rice can be grown and harvested three times a year in many areas. Due to a number of factors, Bangladesh's labour-intensive agriculture has achieved steady increases in food grain production despite the often unfavourable weather conditions. These include better flood control and irrigation, a generally more efficient use of fertilizers, and the establishment of better distribution and rural credit networks. With 28.8 million metric tons produced in 2005-2006 (July-

