

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.

**Violent protests**

It is not the right way in which the garment workers are protesting against the declared minimum wages. It is extremely shocking for the whole nation that they vandalised a number of shops and lots of vehicles as part of their protest. Protest should never be violent and destructive causing a huge damage to public property. All demonstrators could have gathered in front of the relevant ministry to express their demands.

As these labourers have a prime contribution to our economy, the authorities must be aware of their needs. It is also important to introduce a new legislation to stop such harmful activities.

**Kazi Shoab**  
One-mail

**Our identity**

In Muslim countries like Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey, Malaysia, the first name of a citizen is Arabic and the last name is based on their own cultural background. For example, the Iranian govt took an initiative in 1960s and successfully re-established Persian culture in naming. Only in Bangladesh our names, both first and last, are Arabic.

**Dr Mohammad Karim**  
GP, Australia

**Constitution amendment**

A staff reporter's front page comments on the subject was published in a local English daily on July 25th, quoting the views of Mr. Moudud Ahmed, which was apparently sensible, logical and fair. However, his proposal about 'equal representation' from the opposition was in that context illogical!

To be fair and above board, and to respect the voters' decision, representation in the proposed committee should be in proportion to the number of seats won by the party, as it clearly represents the voters' preference. And this just cannot be ignored at the whims of the BNP, generally considered as more irrational and dictatorial!

This may be the reason why they lost a free and fair election, independently conducted by the neutral interim government set up by the armed forces, who had no subjective "axe to grind."

In my humble opinion, apart from the MPs nominated by the party, any party which has a minimum of ten seats in parliament should nominate an outsider, (preferably a retired High Court or Supreme Court Judge or an eminent lawyer) who in their opinion is a legal expert so that views from the people are also presented, beyond only the party line. Such a rounded committee will hopefully recommend objective and rational amendments to the constitution!

**S.A. Mansoor**

Dhaka

**Use of nicknames**

The letter from one of your readers on July 31 is spot on and quite relevant in our global village. In Bangladesh nicknames are fashionably added at the end of a person's name quite regularly. This would not matter if such persons were confined to their native places, as local customs would clarify what is the real name and what is the nickname. But with prosperity most people travel abroad nowadays for business, for jobs, for education, etc and there the problem of family name or last name arises. In all European countries and other places where European civilisation prevails by descent, last name of a person is his/her family name, for example-Smith, Blair, Brown, Sarkozy, Merkel, Putin, etc., showing a family connection by which name his/her ancestry can be traced over hundreds of years.

Adding the nickname as the last name makes it not the nickname but the family name in the wider world, without any family connection whatsoever, and it is this name which takes precedence over others. For instance, if someone's Bengali name is Syed Muhammad Ismail Badal, he will inevitably be addressed by most people as Mr Badal abroad and his real family name Syed will lose all significance. This is a great loss and the only efficacious remedy is not to give a nickname to a child. Muslims of other countries do not have any nicknames to my knowledge, and this was also the practice of Indian and Bengali Muslims during the time of our grandfathers (about 90 years ago). Nicknames are widely practised by Hindus within the close family circles only, and is not appended in any official document for recognition by the general public.

Life is also so much easier without an official nickname tagged on when one is filling up so many forms nowadays!

**Engineer Shafi Ahmed**

London, UK

**Metro rail**

Dhaka has a population of 13 million. Not only that, it is one of the densely populated cities in the world. The traffic congestion of the city is increasing day by day as millions of people are living here, without any proper plan made by the DCC authorities. Already the city authorities have taken many initiatives to solve the problem but all the measures have failed. The govt is thinking about introducing elevated expressway, metro rail and many modern facilities. Statistics show that the most populated cities in the world have such kinds of advanced modes of communication. But Dhaka has no such modern communication system.

So, this is a good initiative of the present govt to construct metro rail to ease traffic congestion in the capital.

**Eng. Md. Meheub Haque**

BUET

**Tuition fees**



JASHIM SALAM / DRINKNEWS

Recently, the private university students and Chittagong University students protested against the increased tuition fees. From the very beginning the tuition fees of the private universities were high, but it has become a routine to increase the tuition fees every year. Most of the private universities don't even have their own campuses. But the tuition fees are raised regularly.

This time VAT led to the increase, though the government assured the students that it would not be applied. Is the government thinking seriously about this matter?

Chittagong University students are also protesting against the increased tuition fees. The university administration is acting like the opposing force.

This is not what we expect. The university administration and the ministry of education must be very careful while tackling this issue. The university authorities should discuss with the students before taking any major decision.

**Fahim Ibne Sarwar**

Department of International Relations

Jahangirnagar University

**Changing the constitution**

All the recent hue and cry from various people about our constitution, following a landmark verdict from the country's highest court, apparently indicates that they are ignoring a major factor concerning the issue while trying to guess the future outcome, and it is the NAME of our country. The name of our country itself clearly bears the suggestion on how to solve an issue pertaining to the Constitution which is the basis of governance. It is good news that a parliamentary committee of experts has been formed after the court verdict to sort out ways on how to proceed with its suggestion, and at the same time it is unfortunate as the opposition has refused to cooperate with it thinking that the committee itself is going to finalise the changes. It is bemusing why and what makes the opposition think like that. As far as my knowledge is concerned, the constitution of a state dictates the basic fundamental principles by which it is to be governed; and therefore, it is understood that no government can direct its 'Director' on how to direct (changes / amendments) simply because it is having a majority in parliament. People of the

republic have selected and elected their representatives to form a parliament for planning, organising and running the day to day business affairs of the state, but not to manipulate or reshape the State's basic pillars.

Although I am not an expert in this field, yet it is my sheer belief that any amendment or changes to the constitution that may be considered necessary for the greater interest of people, must be approved by the OWNERS of the state and not by the owners' representatives.

At the conclusion of my letter, I would like to ask the readers to give their valuable opinions on this question.

**Urmila Chowdhury**  
One-mail

**Democratic norms**

In the last three decades, we have observed the two major political parties making below-the-belt remarks about each other's leader. A political party is defined by others, and defines itself, as much by its ideology as by the leadership it decides to have. It is rather self-serving for any party to insist that its rivals and detractors should not discuss about its leader. A debate about leaders, their flaws and their merits is at the heart of democratic give and take. Leaders do bring value addition to their parties. In fact, most of our political parties are increasingly becoming leader-centric.

It is therefore natural that rivals should want to question the other political parties' leaders. This is the everyday stuff of electoral exchange.

A political party is entitled to put greater emphasis on its programmes and achievements than on its leaders; but the rivals, too, are entitled to try to reverse the order in their sales pitch to the electorate. All that the country can insist on is that political parties remain mindful of good taste and refrain from words, suggestions and insinuations that coarsen the public discourse.

As the two largest formations, the major political parties have a special responsibility for preserving the tone and tenor of a civilized political culture. The ruling party and the opposition are the outcome of democracy. They are political enemies, but they should be enlightened ones. It is said that culture is the refinement of the tongue.

Politicians should refrain from making personal remarks against their rivals. That is the true spirit of democracy. Democracy arises out of the notion that those who are equal in any respect are equal in all respects.

**Gopal Sengupta**  
Canada

**A pertinent question**

The seventh amendment to the constitution, which legitimises HM Ershad's takeover of power and the acts under his military rule, could have the same fate as the fifth amendment, said Law Minister Shafique Ahmed. The seventh amendment ratified the proclamation of martial law and other regulations, orders and instructions by Ershad between March 24, 1982, and November 10, 1986. A writ petition, filed on January 24 this year, challenging the legality of the amendment is pending with the High Court. We are yet to know the fate of this writ petition.

There is no doubt that in the constitutional history of Bangladesh, the verdict of the Hon'ble Supreme Court would be written in golden letters.

This is such a historical event which can only be compared with the victory in our struggle for independence. It is very encouraging to learn that the government has already constituted a parliamentary committee to implement the verdict.

However, it is not understood why the 5th amendment of our constitution alone is illegal, why not the 7th amendment? We all know that by the 7th amendment, General Ershad tried to legalise all his deeds and misdeeds done under his martial law. I believe that there should not be any double standards.

I would request the legal experts of our country to please come forward and urge the apex court to give the similar verdict annulling the 7th amendment, for there are hundreds of thousands of people who were adversely and unlawfully affected by many dictatorial fiat of Ershad, but have no means to go to the higher courts.

**Hafejul Alam**  
A former civil servant

**Palli bike and public sufferings**

Palli bikes have eased communication. Though this is considered a rural vehicle, the vehicle is mostly driven in urban areas. In upazila and district levels, this vehicle is an alternative to rickshaws is increasing in number due to lack of monitoring by the administration. It is observed that multiple problems are visible in most of the cities because of the vehicle having no authorization.

The authorities concerned should look into the matter.

**Kbd M Alamgir hossain**  
Upazila election officer  
Chhataak

**New sewerage line needed**

The sewerage line of Wari residential area is more than half a century old. It has damaged, collapsed, blocked and become inoperative in many places. Dirty and stinking water and human excreta overflow the manholes and float on roads, streets, lanes and by-lanes and nearby municipal drains polluting the different localities.

Through your daily we would request Dhaka Wari and Dhaka Municipal Corporation to kindly look into the matter and clean and repair the sewerage line. It is all the best if a new sewerage line is constructed in Wari residential area in the interest of public health and public service.

It may be mentioned here that Wari is no more like that of 1950s and 1960s. It is now an over crowded, road traffic jammed area and many sky-high buildings and apartments have been constructed replacing the old single and two storied houses. Wari has the distinction of being the best residential area of Dhaka some 40-50 years ago.

**OH Kabir**  
Wari, Dhaka

**House rent**

It appears from the media reports that some people have sought the help of higher courts relating to tenants' grievances against landlords. As a small flat owner, I was earning Tk. 5,000/- per month in July 1989 when the highest pay was Tk. 6,000/- per month as per the Pay Commission. Today I am getting Tk. 18,000/- per month while the highest pay as per govt. scale is around Tk. 60,000/- per month. In the

above context, what should have been the rent of my flat? On the other hand, the flat can be sold at Tk. 50,00,000/- (fifty lakh) and thus I can earn Tk. 5,00,000/- (five lakh) comfortably as interest by keeping the money in banks. What should be my choice when I come to look for a good tenant, pay bribe to officials of income tax, Wasa, land revenue, DCC etc. etc.

Let gentlemen of the Jury decide honestly.

**Mahmud Ali**

New Eskatan Road

Dhaka

**ACC**

Reformulating the Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) is a need of the hour. It is indeed one of the pledges of the government made before the last elections. It is really good thinking by the govt that it must protect its civil servants before they are put into trouble. So, before filing any case against the govt servants, the ACC should obtain permission from the govt. Otherwise, the ACC could file cases against innocent officials resulting in their harassment both socially and financially.

I should support the govt attitude regarding reformulation of the ACC.

**Agovt official**

BWDB, Dhaka

**Sanchay Patra**

At a time the rate of interest on Sanchay Patra was 16-22%, the monthly expenditure of a moderate family was Tk.15,000/-. Now the rate is 10.35-11.25%, when the monthly expenditures of an old individual is over Tk.20,000/-. If the sale of

Sanchay Patra is limited only to old ones ( 58 years and above), females, disabled, orphans, the rush of purchase will come down. Then the idle and the ill earned money shall go to share market and private enterprises.

Every living person will get old and helpless. Also, every sane person shall have old parents and kin to look after. So, to save the old, disabled, minors, and orphans from humiliation and begging, it is suggested that the present govt. give attention to increasing the rate to 20% at least, without any tax.

**Shamsur Rahman Bhuiyan**  
A 75 years old man  
Adabar, Dhaka

**Activities of BCL**

The Honourable Prime Minister declared that she would cut off all relations with this student organisation. But we have not seen any decrease in BCL's activities, rather their involvement in violent activities is certainly on the increase.

Now some ministers are saying that many notorious activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) have managed to infiltrate into the BCL. We are really disappointed to hear this kind of a statement from our honourable leaders. If there are any bad elements of ICS in BCL, it is your duty to identify and fire them out in no time for the sake of the country. But general people believe not the ICS but some original activists of BCL are responsible for these criminal acts. Probably, there are some influential leaders behind them. Without someone's support how dare they commit these acts?

**Rashid Harun**  
Dhaka

**Minimum wages**



QAMRUZZAMAN / DRINKNEWS

Recently, the government fixed the minimum wage of a garment worker at BDT 3,000 per month. It is an increase of BDT 1500 per month. It looks like very high increment on paper. But would any economic expert give a breakdown of BDT 3000 to prepare a monthly household expenditure for a worker within this fixed amount? I am interested to know how much would be spent on housing, on food, on clothes and

other incidental expenses including medical expenses for a single person. I have not included any recreation expenses because those are not for the workers, as they are not considered humans by the owners but parts of machine.

It seems to me we are living in eighteenth century England, at the beginning of industrial age.

**Qamar Shams**  
Sydney, Australia

**Poor patients**



WAHID ADNANI / DRINKNEWS

Some people come to Dhaka only to get treatment in Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The number of doctors and nurses is very few compared to the number of patients. Hence, the patients are deprived of proper treatment. The beds are always booked and the new patients have to lie on the floor. According to a news channel, the cleaners and other staff replace the doctors at night and carry out operations even. The condition is same in every government hospital. This is the reason why rich people don't go to government

hospitals for treatment. Many TV channels and many newspapers have tried to show the problems of these hospitals, but still no change has occurred. Thus, the poor patients suffer a lot and often die due to lack of care.

I would request the health ministry of the government to visit Dhaka Medical College Hospital so that the condition of the government hospitals will be clear to them as well.

**Md Mahbubur Rahman**  
Dhaka

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