

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.

Unrest in RMG sector



PHOTO: STAR

The present anarchy in garment sector is definitely suicidal, no doubt. The poor workers demanded Tk 5,000 as minimum wage with effect from August 1. The government has fixed it at Tk 3,000 after discussing elaborately with all parties concerned. But there is no logic to give them this enhanced salary from November 01.

The garment owners, too, have many problems. They are also working hard for survival, competing with other countries. They are earning a huge amount of foreign currency and providing about 35 lakh people with jobs.

It is very unfortunate that the so-called workers engaged themselves in vandalising their factories. It is also painful to see the barbaric assault on the poor workers including women by the law enforcers.

The government is blaming the opposition party for their involvement behind this anarchy. In the past, we heard about foreign competitors' hands behind the anarchy. Whatever the reason is, the government should try to solve the problems.

Rashid Harun
Dhaka

Good governance

Good governance is the need of the hour, where there would be no political interference and the entire system should be so smooth that there would be no delay in delivery system. The civil society should be a participant and stakeholder in governance. To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage and kindness. What we choose to emphasize will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places -- and there are so many -- where people behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act. And if we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of the present, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvellous victory.

When government employees over the age of 60 retire to make room for the younger generation, a person who is a Prime Minister thinks s/he is an exception. It appears that all major parties are doubtful of the outcome of the leadership or premiership.

Gopal Sengupta
Canada

Manikganj accident

This matter was reported in some dailies on 3rd August, based on BUET's report on the accident, where two public officials lost their lives! The report identified two major reasons for the head-on collision. One was poor roof safety design of the Pajero jeep assembled by Progoti Industries Ltd, a public enterprise. The other was related to lapses of the driver, who was although in the front, did not suffer a fatal injury! Also, the guard sitting on the front seat, beside the driver, escaped with minor injuries!

I remember a similar accident that happened to us, when our jeep (Land Rover) was travelling to Bogra on the North Bengal highway, in rainy weather, at around 5:00pm, and about twenty or so miles away from Bogra town. The driver who was tired, missed a left turn in the highway, and rolled over and over down the road embankment, about fifteen feet below, to the paddy fields!

As the host I was sitting beside the driver. The driver and I suffered minor injuries, mostly severe back muscular pain. The villagers had to break open the doors to get us out, and the vehicle was a total wreck!

Unfortunately, one of the guests in the back seat, suffered spinal fracture and was

crippled permanently, although he was flown immediately to Bangkok for treatment. Two others in the back suffered fractures of leg, and many cuts and severe abrasions! Luckily, the jeep had a light roof, so the rear passengers did not suffer any head injuries.

In the Pajero, for the ribbed strong steel roof, and possibly with no safety belts or harness being used, the rear passenger's injuries were fatal!

The invisibility of road signs, indicating sharp curves or crossings, because of many unauthorised billboards, was also a pertinent reason. This must be cleared off, as the first step. Possibly dark roads with invisible road signs, which should be in luminous paint, and the driver not familiar with the road, or driving at night could be added reasons to compound the matter.

However, safety set-up for rear seat passengers is a top priority matter for these vehicles, otherwise it will become a death trap for passengers sitting in the rear seats. This matter must be tackled with top priority.

Engr. S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Nimtoli inferno

I want to say something about Nimtoli inferno.

The government can take responsibility of a marriage. I have no problem! But the government has no right to play with the people. Is Nimtoli safe now? Please rehabilitate all of the victims of Nimtoli inferno.

Nabik
Dhaka

Police atrocities

Almost every day we see in the newspapers police charging batons heavily on people, irrespective of male, female, student, pedestrian, rickshaw/bus passengers etc. for maintaining law and order!

Then where is the difference between a popular government and an autocratic one?

Md. Lutfar Rahman
Sector 3, Uttara
Dhaka

CU incident

Still we remember February 18, 1969. Professor Samsuzzoha of Rajshahi University was killed by the police when he tried to save his students from getting shot. February 18 is now observed as Zoha Day. He said to police, "Your bullets will pierce my heart first, before they hit any of my students."

Now compare this with what happened at CU a few days ago. I can't understand how a teacher can behave with his students this way. It was not a political demonstration, it was a demonstration against the tuition fee hike, which is beyond the affordability of the students.

Bravery medal!

I just could not believe my eyes when I read the news on Al Jazeera. It said that the soldier who was responsible for killing 5 people on the aid carrying ship heading towards Gaza is in the line for a bravery medal. Nine people were killed from close range, they were shot on their heads and their backs. When people all over the world are stunned by this cruel action and demonstrating against Israel, it is awarding bravery medals for killing innocent unarmed people! It is not an act of bravery but an act of cowardice.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong

Freedom of choice

My grandmother is a respectable old lady who has seen many days, ups and downs and walked through the long way of the world. She always says "jar jar poshak tar." She is religious and does not miss her prayers. She went to hajj twice and intends to visit the holy land again. To me, her opinion counts and I have always admired her. And in my personal opinion, when it comes to lifestyle and attire, people should be given freedom to choose his or her own.

Cantara Wali Ruhi
MBA student, DU

Definition of hartal

This refers to the letter by Nur Jahan, on August 02. It is both amusing and sad to see the way our politicians change the definition of things according to the position of their party. It is not only hartal, our very expensive, national parliament also gets the same treatment from our politicians. When they are in the government they develop an extra-lubricated, honey-coated love for our parliament. But as soon as they lose the election and go in the opposition, they suddenly develop an acute phobia for it!

It is nice to see the Awami League government calling on the BNP with so much compassion to join parliament. But when that same Awami League was in the opposition, not only the BNP but the whole country begged them to join the parliament. They didn't listen. Why should the BNP now feel obliged to do something that the AL never bothered to do when it was under the same obligations?

Azad Miah
Oldham
UK

With due respect, I would request him to resign.

Minhaz Uddin Ahmed
Department of Business
Administration
SUST, Sylhet

Beating the young students of Chittagong University, who were protesting the tuition fee hike, is totally unacceptable. Such cruelty should be stopped immediately. Roughing up the young people including the female students is sheer violation of modesty and humanity. It cannot continue in an independent country.

Anika Tasnim
Muhammadpur
Dhaka

Girls' mindset

Some days back, I took part in a discussion. A female student-- presently studying MA in English in Chittagong College-- opined, "Actually, I want to marry such a person as would be more qualified than me."

Why do today's girls think so? Why don't they think otherwise?
Habibur Rashid Ismail
Chittagong

Every hour, on the hour



WANID ADNANI / DRINKERS

The above caption could be a marvelous promotional slogan for a transportation company to proclaim their punctuality and level of service. But I have chosen the above to describe the ever-fleeting entity of our life, Dhaka, electricity. To be good to its name, it comes and goes with electrifying speed; and with a perpetual sense of regularity and punctuality.

Yes, it comes and goes at a regular interval --- every hour and on the hour. If you are even with the idea, you might get electricity say at even hours of 0600hrs, 0800hrs, 1000hrs --- 2200hrs, 0200hrs, 0400hrs and so forth. In other words, you will be without it exactly at 0700hrs, 0900hrs, 1100hrs --- 2300hrs, 0300hrs. But look! You are at odds. Just think of your ceiling fan going off at 0100hrs, coming back at 0200hrs and departing at 0300hrs when you are in deep slumber or trying to catch a sleep in the sultry summer nights. Loss of power at 1100hrs is odd enough, at 0100hrs is odder and 0300hrs is the oddest.

The system is overloaded, hence

some load has to be shed. And the system is over loaded because we produce less than what we use or wish to use. Fair enough. And the problem can't be fixed overnight! Then one night's loss of sleep would go without a whimper. Let us only hope that the problem is fixed in the next one thousand and one nights! That's little less than three years. But what one fails to understand is that with the Boro Crops safely at home and the water pumps enjoying a period of hibernation (good night's sleep) where has the power gone.

The latest theory says that we don't have enough gas to run the power stations. While we were once supposed to float on gas, now we are starving for it. We have a huge reserve of coal but we cannot decide whether to go for open pit, close pit or gasification system. Why don't we try all the three! Given our mindset, this filibustering could go on for years and nights together till we reach the brink, since we are so good at playing brinkmanship! Let's go for it.

M. Zakiul Islam
One-mail

Unexpected

The students of Chittagong University were protesting the hike in tuition fees. It is debatable whether they were doing right or wrong. But the way the university authorities handled the matter was uncivilised. Different newspapers published photos of police brutality on students including female students which is not expected in a university.

Pradyut Kumar Saha
Kazipara, Dhaka

Believe it or not

One can go to downtown Dhaka from Uttara with only Tk 6.00 as travelling cost and comparatively within a shorter time. This was absurd to me till I travelled from Airport Railway Station to Kamalapur station by train on 13 July at a cost of Taka 6 only. This will be unbelievable to many in this time of high living costs.

Md. Lutfar Rahman
Faculty of Business
Administration
IUBAT, Dhaka

Slow lanes and reckless driving

I refer to your article published on 3rd August. Firstly, I express my condolence for the families of the Secretary of the Women and Children Affairs Ministry, the BSCIC chairman, and hundreds of other families who have lost their loved ones in unnecessary tragedies on the roads of Bangladesh.

As a regular traveller, and sometimes driver, on Bangladesh's inter-district roads I want to encourage the government to act with caution and thought before installing slow lanes on highways. I cannot count the number of times my car has been forced onto the side of the road as the only way to avoid a wildly driven bus charging towards us while it overtakes another bus. This is despite my car flashing its headlights, using its horn and illuminating its hazard warning lights. Careless bus drivers, and occasionally private vehicle drivers, move down the wrong side of the road despite on-coming traffic with an arrogance that those who have not visited Bangladesh could not believe. Any design of slow lanes which prevents private cars from escaping to the side of the road in the face of reckless on-coming vehicles may actually increase road deaths unless these dangerous overtaking practices

Solar energy

One way to get rid of load shedding in private houses could be use of solar energy by public houses. The government can bring some relief to common people's household by making mandatory use of solar energy in shopping malls, garment factories, educational institutions, banks, multinationals and other big corporate houses. For installing a solar panel in individual households is a costly affair, but these big

profit-making enterprises can easily install solar panels and use energy from this source for their own consumptions. This practice will then reduce the pressure and demand on existing electric supply and can be diverted to individual households. This will also increase the volume of electricity users, especially in rural areas.

Qamar Shams
Australia



PHOTO: STAR

cease.

When I was a young driver in England I was taught by my father-in-law, a member of the respected Institute of Advanced Motoring, that one should never be on the wrong side of the road in the face of on-coming traffic. To make another driver take avoiding action was a matter of intense shame. I hesitate to recommend the death penalty for drivers found to be on the wrong side of the road when a fatal accident occurs, but perhaps something as drastic as life imprisonment, for the driver and the person employing the driver, may be what it takes to bring discipline to Bangladesh's roads. A few high profile cases may bring some sense to bear.

John D Marsden
One-mail

Titas gas

Before discovery of the Bibiyana Gas Field, Titas was the biggest field in Bangladesh which started to produce gas from 1968. The initial gas in Titas field was 6.36 trillion cubic feet (TCF). 3.16 TCF gas has already been produced. Twenty-five percent of total requirement of gas in Bangladesh comes from this field. But now it is facing serious problems. The reservoir engineer and the reservoir geologist have detected the problem. The problem is that a huge amount of water is being produced during gas production from Well-14 which is known as seepage of water. At the beginning of this situation, the geologist assumed that the amount of water was not too much. But later it was found to be too much.

The problem must be solved on a priority basis.
Mohammad Mamun-ur-Rashid
Student, Department of PGE
SUST, Sylhet

Health card for drivers

The other day while I was going to WVA Friday clinic, Dhanmondi, I took a CNG auto-rickshaw. The roads were empty and I noticed the CNG driver's rough driving. While talking to him I noticed he was behaving abnormally. I asked him whether he was intoxicated or not, whether he took drugs to which he answered, 'I won't lie to you, you are a doctor, I take alcohol with my friends, but only in the night, so there is no problem now, you can relax Madam'. I asked him whether he smoked Cannabis (Ganja) to which he said, 'Yes, but don't worry, please relax'. I told him about the serious bad effects i.e. that it could lead to death. He replied, "life and death comes from Allah- however, my wife is very good, she tolerates everything." At that point I wanted to get down from his vehicle- but no other CNG was available.

The ironical truth is that many drivers of buses, trucks,

and CNG's are intoxicated. I would request the government to set up medical teams for health check ups of all heavy vehicle drivers and CNG/Taxi Cab drivers. All drug levels are detectable by simple blood tests. Health cards should be given to drivers before they drive and traffic sergeants can regularly monitor these health cards. To a great extent, reckless driving is a result of illiteracy and therefore a minimum level of education should also be made compulsory. An educated and healthy person cannot drive like a lunatic.

Dr Nagma Newaz
Child Specialist and
Environmental Activist

Great decision

The prime minister's decision to form a separate ministry for Bangladesh Railway is a pragmatic one. Certainly, this bold and timely decision in the backdrop of universal demand in the country will add another feather to her cap and therefore, she certainly deserves congratulations from the countrymen. We are now eagerly awaiting necessary legal and administrative formalities to form the ministry in no time so that it can start functioning as soon as possible. The bureaucracy is the only agency which can create impediment in implementing the proposal and therefore all concerned should be careful about it. The prime minister may kindly consider dynamic and dedicated leaders to head this important ministry to take charge of this most problematic transport sector and put the railway back on the track. We are eagerly awaiting prime minister's quick actions to implement her historic decision for the welfare of the people.

We believe, this kind of public welfare decisions will rekindle the hopes and aspirations of the countrymen for a better future Bangladesh. May Allah help and guide her in this direction.

Mohammad Ataul Hoque
One-mail

Noman Khan

Heartiest congratulations to A.H.M. Noman Khan on his being awarded the Ramon Magsaysay Award 2010. This recipient of Asia's most prestigious award is an extraordinary person who has proved that he speaks through his work, not through any other means, and that he works for the suffering humanity and not for self-aggrandizement.

Instead of choosing a path of profitable business or any other money generating career, Mr. Khan has followed a least trodden path, serving the people with various disabilities, who are thirteen million in number in the country. He wants to ensure their easy access to livelihood, education, medical care and other opportunities required for a more produc-

tive and dignified life. He says, "Persons with disabilities have dreams which they want to fulfil like everyone else -- to work, to sustain a future, to exist side by side with others. All they need is the proper environment to work in and lead life as equal to everyone else."

As has been reported, Mr. Khan, who was in government service till 1995, relinquished his job and decided to deal with disability issues being inspired by attending a training programme on community-based rehabilitation in Indonesia.

Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation has honoured Mr. Khan and his organization, the Centre for Disability in Development (CDD) in continuation of recognising individuals and organizations who address humanitarian issues with extraordinary enthusiasm, integrity and selflessness.

In the citation for Noman Khan, a recipient of Magsaysay Award 2010, the board of trustees said that they have recognised his pioneering leadership in mainstreaming persons with disabilities in the development process of Bangladesh, and in working vigorously with all sectors to build a society that is truly inclusive and barrier-free.

Once again, we congratulate Mr. Khan on his grand achievement and appreciate the award giving trustee board for evaluating and inspiring the noble deeds of this extraordinary man of our country.

M. Rukanuddin
Dhaka

City roads

The road pattern of Dhaka city is not planned. In planning stage, road network should be developed first before developing an area. If that is so then the road network planner can implement his/her plan. But in most of the cases the areas of Dhaka city have been developed without proper planning. Residential, commercial, industrial all activities are mixed in an area which is very difficult and complicated to handle. This is one of the reasons of traffic jam.

Another big problem is that a large number of tall buildings have been constructed near the roads and intersections. This situation hinders the future treatment of road network. For road widening, intersection treatment, overall change in the road geometry is very difficult.

Dhaka city should have rectangular road pattern with diagonal roads for the bypass facility. As it is the capital of Bangladesh, There are some Central Business Districts (CBD) areas where commercial activities are undertaken. So bypass facility is very much needed in this city to prevent vehicles from moving through these districts.
Engr. Montasir Mamun
MSc student (Civil)
BUET