

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 250 words. All letters will be subject to editing.



JASHIM SALAM / DRIKNEWS

Support to rural cottage industries

Rural cottage based handloom weaving, potteries, iron-mongering and such other cottage handicrafts from the villages need encouragement and necessary financial support to grow. For them, going to normal commercial banks for financing their working capital, is fairly complicated. It is usually beyond their capabilities to provide the needed guarantees and other documents needed for processing the loan. Further, the usual interests on loans charged by commercial banks are beyond their limited home based output. This is where Grameen Bank can expand their activities further along with many NGOs who may not be able to provide the necessary working capital needed.

This can find a way to grow our exports of non-traditional items. It is an area where a nationally committed drive encouraged and supported by the government will be a most welcome move in the

right direction. It will help these village cottage industries to flourish, and provide rural employment opportunities.

Very often we see reports in the dailies of village products being stifled at source without the important marketing support needed for creating demand and outlets for these traditional rural enterprises that lack the capabilities to develop the needed downstream market potentials on their own. This is an area of promise for the private-public joint effort to encourage and support rural production potential to find and develop the marketing chain for our urban and potential overseas export markets. This can overcome the bottlenecks and related shortfalls, which need to be pragmatically addressed to help develop, encourage and grow our rural economic activities!

S.A. Mansoor, Dhaka

We are very disappointed

Our daughter has been studying in Shaheed Anwar School since nursery class. Now she is a student of class IV. Shaheed Anwar School is a renowned educational institution. So, we felt proud to admit our daughter there. But the recent activities and rules of the Cantonment Board made us very disappointed.

As per the new rule of the govt., all students of class-V must sit for Junior Certificate Examination and we all appreciate it. But now the Cantonment Board has declared that all students of class-IV must sit for a re-admission test for getting admitted to class-V after the final

exam. We did not get any logical explanation from the authorities for introducing this new system. We discussed the matter with the class teachers and several parents as well but got no positive response. From the school authorities we were told that neither the principal nor the authorities were allowed to interfere in this issue, because this decision directly came from the Cantonment Board.

We would like to draw the attention of the Ministry of Education about this matter. We believe we have the right to get a satisfactory answer from the Cantonment Board.
Mr. and Mrs. Ikram Banani, Dhaka

Think logically

Most mental asylums have a popular test for inmates being considered for release. They are asked to empty a big bucket of water with a small mug while an open tap pours into it. The ones who turn off the tap are considered first. The inference, rightly so, is that they have started to think logically.

A similar start to the solution of the infernal traffic jams of Dhaka is at last discernable amongst the high and mighty. First the finance minister stated that cars carrying less than 4/5 people should not be allowed on some roads. Then the Bangladesh Bank stopped (?) car loans on 5 year cars. Harebrained

and futile as these suggestions are, at least the real cause (hitherto swept under the rug) of traffic jams has been identified.

Hardly 5% of vehicles (mostly office minibuses) carry 4 + people. 30-40% private cars run empty/half-empty. The BB directive on loans for cars should be a BIG FULL STOP for the next 3-5 years as we already have cars filling many times the capacity of our roads.

Grandiose free-ways, highways, airports and the like will only result in more and more cars. Let's have mass transit systems for the common man first. Until then 'Joy Rickshaws'!!!
Sikander Ahmed
Niketon
Gulshan-1, Dhaka

Private cars as public transports?

The finance minister reportedly told the press that the government's only failure is that they could not solve the "Traffic Congestion" in Dhaka. He further informed the press that his government has already worked out a comprehensive plan. He has spelled out eight action plans among which one is very interesting, that is private cars will not be allowed to ply in the Dhaka streets carrying less than 4/5 passengers.

Suppose a business executive lives in Uttara and travels alone every day to his workplace in Motijheel in his chauffeur driven car. Now, if the new rules come into effect, the gentleman will have to collect some 3/4 passengers and travel to Motijheel. If he fails to find the passengers who will go to Motijheel, he will have to drop them in different places and take new passengers to abide by the rule.

If a gentleman needs to go to a hospital with a patient, he will have to look for 3/4 passengers on his way to the hospital. If one does not want to take strangers in his car, all his family members will have to ride with him to his workplace.

Instead of increasing public transport facilities, our government is trying to use private cars as public transports. This will not help to ease traffic congestion at all.
Shafiqul Islam
NY

Islamic values and secularism

This is in response to Mr. Saleh Ayub who wrote something about Islamic values in this page recently. I wonder whether he is aware of the four principles of our constitution. He has failed to understand the real meaning of secularism and has no idea about our culture. Secularism does not mean that obscene dance shows can be arranged in a country where nearly 90 percent of the total

population is Muslim. What is more, our culture is different from that of Europe. It is true that in the present times it is difficult to follow Islamic rules strictly for many reasons, but should we not believe in Allah the Almighty? Should we forgo the Islamic values in the name of modernism, secularism or something else?

Rokib Hasan
On e-mail

RAB and human rights

The latest Wikileaks leakage circulated in both electronic and print media revealed that the UK and the USA are imparting training to Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) personnel to develop their professional skills with special emphasis on the development of values and attitudes towards protecting human rights.

I sincerely hope that such type of training will improve the overall performance of the RAB personnel. Meanwhile in his yearly newsletter (widely distributed), veteran human

rights activist Rev. Father R.W. Timm has raised some questions about the human rights values the RAB personnel are currently maintaining. He particularly pointed to the 'crossfire' culture of the elite force.

It is sincerely hoped that over time the RAB will come out as one of the most efficient and people-friendly law enforcing agencies and human rights preservers.
Professor M Zahidul Haque
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University
Dhaka

Happy New Year!

A new year gives us new hopes. We feel as if we are ready to forget the previous failures and errors and start all over again. By playing our respective role, someday we will be able to eradicate poverty and make Bangladesh a middle-income country. Our new year's resolution is to see a Happy Bangladesh.
Shohag Mostafij
MBA (Strategic & International

Bangladesh in 2030

Some of our VIPs, political leaders, bureaucrats and economists have predicted that by the year 2030 Bangladesh will become one of the 30 rich countries in the world and our per capita income will be US\$4000, which was US\$925 in 2009. Well, let our dream come true.

For the last few years, local and international scientists and experts have been saying that by the year 2025 one third of Bangladesh will go under water due to climate change.

We are beset with multiple social, economic and political problems - river erosion, floods and cyclones, arsenic contaminated water, lack of healthcare facilities, unemployment and housing problem, to name a few.

We need not be very optimistic or very pessimistic about our future. Would our authorities concerned let us know what would be the estimated amount of our foreign loan in the year 2030? Let us move on the right track keeping in mind our past errors in the greater interest of our country.
O H Kabir, Dhaka



MUNIR UZ ZAMAN / DRIKNEWS

People's sufferings



PHOTO: STAR

On the eve of holy Eid-ul-Adha, the construction work of road dividers on the highly congested Green Road near the Panthopath intersection in front of Fattah Plaza was left abandoned causing immense sufferings to the commuters from early morning hours till late at night. I thought the construction work would resume after Eid holidays; but alas, it never happened.

The authorities concerned should immediately look into this and other such matters with a view to mitigating the sufferings of the people.

Situation of this nature is quite common and no one seems to care about the sufferings of the people. In order to bring an end to all these sufferings, it should be made mandatory by the government to complete all public works on schedule and if necessary at their own expense in case of running out of fund, and incompetent contractors should not be awarded with such public works.
Saleh Ayub
On e-mail



ONLINE VOICES

Readers' instant comments on The Daily Star Online reports. Log on to thedailystar.net to leave your comments.

Democracy dealt havoc

HC castigates military regimes of Ershad, Zia in 7th amendment verdict; says military rulers, accomplices must be punished (December 30, 2010)

As their takeovers and regimes were illegal and unconstitutional and not only General Ershad, but all his accomplices, as well as such perpetrators of 1975 martial law, who may still be alive, must be brought to books, proclaiming martial law and ravaging the constitution accounts to treason. It can't be pardoned. Different countries in the world have duly punished the autocrats, this should be the case in Bangladesh too.
Gopal Sengupta

History talks. It is very cruel. No wrong doing goes unpunished. People grab-

bing state power using guns are exposed. General Zia and Ershad back pedaled the nation from the spirit of the Liberation War. All their wrong doings must be authentically probed and they must come under justice.
Khondkar A Saleque

Let us watch who agrees and who does not agree with this landmark and historic judgment. There is no legal scope to choose anything but to obey what has been said in this judgment.
FQ

Ershad had no option other than tak-

ing over. At that time, the country was about to be destroyed by the years of misrule of the BNP.

M.H. Rahmatullah

Those involved in violation of democracy and constitution should be brought to justice. Army rule cannot be the answer to the bad governance. This creates more corruption and lots of political opportunists.

Shamsul Bhuiyan

Army rule can never be an answer. However, how come this time the army backed govt. of 1/11 provided the answer?

Concerned

It's good that the HC has declared the 5th and 7th amendments illegal. But this has cost us about 15 years.

Rupoom Mahmud

This is a great day. Finally, the acts of martial law and the machinations to invalidate the premise of that epic struggle are being called what they really were, sedition. However, unless one looks at the underlying causes, history is liable to repeat, new laws notwithstanding.

Ahmed Badruzzaman

We need to come clean from our past military misrule as many other countries have already done to show that

they are not afraid of the criminals. The power was hijacked because of military generals' own interests. And not for greater interests of the country as these criminals had claimed. It is not too late to prosecute these people to make sure that nobody would dare to do it again!

Dev Saha

Is there any democracy in Bangladesh? If terrorism is the outcome of democracy, we don't need that.

Sujon

These are facts. But the BNP and the JP were from cantonment. Now, this ruling of HC will encourage another division between liberation forces and these parties.

Fida Likhon

Kudos to the sagacity of the judges. Now, it's about time to put the offenders to trial.

Shauqib Quoreshi

General Ershad's party is one of the members of Mohajote, which is supporting the government. The AL's association with the JP is deplorable. Previously, AL was associated with Jamaat-e-Islami.

Anonymous

The verdict handed down by the High Court is a milestone.