

Protect national interest

The National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Ports has called for a half day hartal on July 3, in protest against government's signing of a production sharing contract with the US oil company ConocoPhillips on June 16, which is against the interest of the country. We think people from all walks of life should support them and make the strike successful because it is solely on their behalf. We are outraged by the government's intolerant attitude towards the protesters. They beat up the national committee leaders and activists and snatched away banners and placards from them. The committee is not politically motivated, its only aim is to protect our national

resources; whenever needed, it came forward to resist the action of the government which could harm the country. The committee has forced the previous BNP led alliance government to discard a plan to engage Asia Energy for open-pit coal mining in Phulbari through a popular movement. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who was then the leader of the opposition, went all the way to Phulbari to express her solidarity with the committee. Now people's interest has become less important to her. It is really very strange how their perception changes with the change of their position.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong



Bangladeshis abroad

Most of the highly educated people have migrated to other countries due to government's negligence in providing appropriate benefits to those highly qualified personalities. So it is time Bangladesh should view its expatriate population as a strategic asset, and not as a liability. Not as a brain drain.

Bangladesh could set up an independent institution to engage with Bangladeshis who live in the United States and elsewhere. Through outreach and public diplomacy, this institution could foster greater business, educational, medical, engineering and cultural ties with Bangladeshis who live abroad.

Countries including India, Brazil, China, some African and Arab countries and many more, have understood the value of diaspora communities, and have dedicated nation's programs to leverage the benefits. Bangladesh should make immediate approach. Tapping into the global Bangladeshis network could also help understand what drives emigration and how to foster a sense of attachment. Those brains, after all, are still Bangladeshis.

Gopal Sengupta
Canada

At long last!

A front page centre piece photo-news from "Focus Bangla" source was published on June 25, in a local English daily, which was a classic 'real life' case of 'too little, too late'. On a liberal optimistic viewpoint, one may say that it is "better late than never"!

At this rate of progress; we look forward to the next ten gas wells drilled by BAPEX in the coming five centuries hence; say by the year 2511! Indeed a record rate of progress; which even beats the slowest snail's pace! However, one may find satisfaction by quoting the saying: "Slow and steady wins the race"!

Could you kindly look into the matter more deeply, and let your readers know, the reasons behind this 'record-making' pace of progress; given our desperate shortage of natural gas today. Does BAPEX deserve any (negative!) commendation for this rate of progress? What are the views of the readers of this astonishing piece of news?

Engr. S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Why this disparity?

The government sponsored national saving certificate has been a popular source of investment for all sections of people, especially the retired persons who mainly hail from middle and lower income groups due to getting a better dividend against their deposits.

However, owing to present government's whimsical decision to cut the dividend on the saving certificates, many had withdrawn their money and opt to invest in the share market for getting better profit. But unfortunately, taking advantage of their ignorance, some money hungry looters very tactfully defrauded millions of these marginal investors of their lifetime savings and made them virtually paupers.

As for the saving certificates, what is really disturbing is that the government applies double standards! For example, a government servant gets much higher percentage of dividends than a non government staff. A government staff gets Tk. 3125/- against a deposit of Tk. 1 Lakh every three months. A non government staff gets only Tk. 2250/- for the same amount. May we seek the finance ministry's rationale and clarifications behind this disparity? We think in a democratic country everyone should be treated equally.

Humayun Hyder
Zigatola
Dhaka

Business class bus!

The other day I was heading for Karatia, Tangail. Suddenly a recklessly driven bus caught my attention. "Hanif Exclusive Business Class" was written on top of the bus. It had no signal lights. If this is their business class service, what about their ordinary service? Last but not the least, how come these busses ply in front of traffic police?

Khandaker Zia Hasan
Special Correspondent Bangladesh
Weekly Jogajog

We wait for thee, O rain!



Rainy season, one of the six seasons of Bangladesh, comes after the scorching heat of summer makes life unbearable. The nature gets a new life. Trees get fresh and look green. Various types of flowers bloom in this season. When the rain stops sometimes there is a rainbow in the sky. What a sight! What is most important is that agriculture depends on the amount of rainfall. The ground water level is recharged by the rains. Sometimes it rains heavily

for days together which causes flood. Flood brings untold sorrows and sufferings. The city dwellers suffer most for water-logging. They do not get any transport to go to their destination. Traffic jam increases everywhere. Nevertheless, we wait eagerly for this season.

Md. Arshad Ali
Department of Physics
University of Chittagong

Stop finding faults!

In this world not all people will like you. And you can't please everyone. But there are some people who try to distract and demoralize others by trying to find faults pointlessly. They come and advise you what you should do or not. And if it has something to do with creativity, like composing music and stuff; they are over enthusiastic. If you start something new, they come up to depress you. Criticism is alright as far as it is constructive and not discouraging. Proper criticism in proper place is an art, otherwise it only ends up in 'finding faults with others'. There is a fine line between "Cool, but you can do a lot better than this" and "You're no good for doing this". Most people fail to criticize properly by trying to put others' spirit down but while doing that they only let their own frustration out. May be that's why Kobi guru said, "Lok er kotha nish ne kaan e..."

CW
On e-mail

Railway tickets in black market

Train journey is very popular because it is comfortable and cheap. Other than train, all kinds of transports' fare have already hiked. But artificial ticket crisis is the worst problem the passengers are facing nowadays. Passengers do not get tickets even before 10 to 12 days of their journey. Bangladesh Railway has introduced online ticketing system and passengers can look into the screen which shows the availability of seats. The screen always shows that all tickets are sold, even before one week of a journey. Recently, a widespread allegation was made by the passengers that some corrupt railway officials are involved in siphoning off tickets to black marketers. Passengers have also complained that if someone pays extra money to the counter man, s/he can get a ticket easily. A group of black marketers move freely in Kamalapur Railway Station and openly sell tickets charging high price. Ministry of Communications has already got a bad reputation. So, my request to the railway authorities please identify those who are involved in this bad practice and take stern action against them. Otherwise, people will reject this popular service forever.

Mohammed Jashim Uddin, Dhaka

Will they ever be punished?

The plunderers of the Sundarbans are cutting valuable trees and selling it in public with the help of some unscrupulous employees of the forest department. It is an open secret in the locality. But none even dare to protest the crime. In Paikgachha, Shyamnagar and Ashasuni Upazila headquarters, these illegal logs are being sold in presence of the law enforcers.

Everybody knows who the criminals are, yet the police are 'unaware' of them. This felling and selling of logs may make the Sundarbans barren very soon. Immediate actions should be taken against the culprits.

Nazia Afrin
Shekhertek
Muhammadpur
Dhaka

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Saturday's The Daily Star report headlined "AL sees no confrontation"

Anonymous
The country is moving towards crisis.

London Eye
Constitutional amendment by parliament must be a sacred one.

Rahim
Can Suranjit Sengupta specify the standard benchmark which AL will accept if BNP would come with a proposal? It is just a futile attempt to make others foolish.

Anonymous
Confrontation may not happen in all cases. We feel that there will be severe confrontation, conflict, fight and consequent casualties during the elections. And the oppositions cannot confront the government but the government party can surely confront the powerless opposition.

Manzoor Ashraf
All confrontations can be resolved through dialogue. So I request BNP and AL to sit together to find out a peaceful solution of all major issues. After all, AL still has more than two years to continue. And it will be unfair to disturb the economy of Bangladesh through agitations.

Anonymous
AL is only afraid of BNP. It does not bother for others. They will even go to other political parties to win next election. They only want power. It is difficult to trust AL. It says one thing and does another for their own benefit. We had seen it in Ershad's case.

Tomal
This is not a true assumption. The political leaders are blind clinching over the state power. They even do not think with minimum logic. Why will the oppositions take part in the next election under a political government?

Having majority in parliament does not mean that the majority of the people support to scrap the caretaker government system right now. Confrontation is obvious if BNP does not take part in the next general election. The government is doing the same wrong done by the BNP govt. in their last term.

The value of political confrontation might be extremely immense for the nation. Every political party must respect public opinion while taking such a crucial decision.

Our attitude towards divorce

The attack on Rumana by her husband indicates that even the highly educated women of our society are not safe. Rumana tolerated everything for the sake of her daughter. This was the greatest mistake she made. She could have divorced her husband long time ago. Unfortunately, we still think divorce is a social crime. It is high time that we changed our attitude towards divorce. Every person has the right to lead her/his life the way s/he wants.

Of course, we all should try our level best to protect our family. If Face book plays any negative role in destroying mutual trust in a family, we must avoid it. But what is more important is that we need to respect individualism.

Pradip Das
Lecturer
BHPI, CRP

