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PHOTO: MICHAEL MELFORD

Giving transit facility to India

Do Bangladesh and India believe and practice the 'give and take' policy on equitable basis? In the past, Dhaka and New Delhi signed several treaties and agreements on various issues. But in most of the cases, we saw that India took from us whatever she wanted and we got nothing in return. Share of Teesta water and transit are two separate issues. We are entitled to our due share of Teesta water under the international law.

About giving transit facility to India, our people have different opinions. Some support it while others oppose it. Would our leaders, irrespective of political affiliation, kindly tell us their logical reasons in support of transit? Or the reasons why they oppose it?

However, we request all concerned to take into consideration the following two important points before signing the transit agreement and make a decision beforehand:

- 1) Fixing the reasonable rate of transit fees.
- 2) India must give us a written undertaking that she would not use the transit facility for movement of Indian troops and carrying arms and ammunition through Bangladesh territory.

These two steps, if taken, would avoid misunderstanding between Bangladesh and India in the future. A stitch in time saves nine.

O H Kabir
 Wari, Dhaka

Leave the economy alone

The country's economists at a seminar organised by The Daily Star have made lengthy recommendations about Bangladesh economy but these are all subjective analyses from their 'ivory towers'. It is astonishing that they never cite the phenomenal example of China where economic liberalisation made them number 2 in the world. If Bangladesh follows their economic path, free all entry barriers to competition and liberalise trade, it could well become the number 2 economy in Asia.

All they repeat is what they were taught in their university classes and later in their 'donor funded' offices. Economy should be left to entrepreneurs, to the common people. The people are rightfully the experts as buyers, sellers, investors, and risk-takers, not the economists who have zero 'practical' knowledge.

The market works spontaneously, unnoticed, and unplanned but bring huge positive results if allowed to function freely. Bangladesh economy would only boom if the experts and economists find other jobs to worry their heads about, not economy.

Furthermore, they list 'flight of capital' as another major cause that hampers our economy, but our taka is not an acceptable currency in any country other than in Bangladesh. Therefore, why would anyone transfer taka abroad legally or illegally? Taka remains in Bangladesh and what actually happens is an ownership change. Taka is exchanged for US Dollar or Swiss Franc.

There is no 'flight of capital' and taka, ill-gotten or super clean, remains within the country forever. A holder of Dollar or Franc values Taka and exchanges it for Taka - a process done routinely by currency traders. The new owner of Taka would surely invest it, save it, or spend it and all these actions do not hamper the economy but incalculably benefits it.

Nizam Ahmad
 London, England

Schoolteacher's woes

It is well-known in our country that teaching (excluding teaching at universities) is the job of a jobless person. Most of the teachers are not well paid. With the little salary they get, they have to struggle to survive.

This situation is further worsened when a teacher does not get his monthly salary if they are absent for a single day. It is really surprising that some private institutions follow such inhuman rules. Recently, a friend of mine, who is a schoolteacher, did not get his monthly salary just because he was absent for a single day. The principal did not approve his casual leave.

My friend remained absent on that day because he had to attend the BCS viva which was held in Dhaka. The school authorities should have some rules and regulations to ensure quality education.

They should not make such rules that deprive the ill-paid teachers of their monthly salary. They must realise that a teacher cannot concentrate on teaching when he is thrown into the darkness of poverty. But I am thankful to the authorities of my institution as they do not have such kind of unjust and inhuman rules.

Mohammad Saifuddin
 English teacher
 Chittagong International School
 Chittagong



PHOTO: STAR

Awami League's counter offensive

We are frustrated about the future of our country; we do not know what is going to happen in the political arena, which seems to be very volatile.

It has been reported that the Awami League is going to launch a programme to counter the BNP's scheduled road march which is arranged to press home their demand for reinstatement of the caretaker government system.

Awami League is going to hold rallies to gain public support in favour of abolishing the caretaker government system. We think it would be unproductive and a waste of time because people from all walks of life have rejected the idea. So, nothing can be gained by the counter rallies. It has been disclosed that Awami League will also try to portray the opposition's move as only to 'foil the war crimes trial and create anarchy'. We are tired of this sort of statements.

Instead of doing unnecessary things, they should concentrate on the welfare of the country. They should think about the people and let them live in peace. If people are happy, there is nothing to fear. They may come to power again, even if the election is held under a caretaker government.

Nur Jahan, Chittagong

NRB investors in capital market in the soup



PHOTO: bloomberg

NRB investors of IPOs are being short-changed at every step. If allotment is not made, they have to move heaven and earth to get refunds:

1. Banks charge heavily for ForEx transactions.
2. Companies neither acknowledge applications nor send the money receipt to the applicant.
3. After lottery, they sit on the FE refund warrants.
4. Without money receipt, refund warrants are neither delivered by the couriers if they come at all.
5. Even after personally collecting the refund warrants and depositing in the bank, it takes months to encash, eg: 1) MI Cement IPO was held in January 2011, refund warrants were collected from their Motijheel Office on 30 March and deposited in the bank. Proceeds are still to be credited 7 months later. 2) Deshbondhu Polymer deposited on 31 March, encashed on 21 June. 3) Salvo Chemical deposited on 31 March, encashed on 31 May. 4) Barakatullah Electro Dynamic deposited on 12 Sept, not yet cashed.

Why can't NRB refunds be credited after lottery to nominated FOREX accounts directly just like the RBs? No wonder NRB investors are leaving the stock market.

Sikander Ahmed
 Niketon, Gulshan 1, Dhaka

Calling hartals

I have read many letters in your columns about hartal. Everyone writes about the bad impacts of hartal and suggest that the BNP should refrain from calling hartals, as it has detrimental effects on our economy. Of course, I agree with all their arguments. But what surprises me is that nobody says a single word about the hartals which were called by the AL in the past. The AL called more hartals than the BNP did, although Sheikh Hasina declared that she would not call any hartal when her party would be in the Opposition. But soon after that she forgot what she had said and called hartals in a row, when she was the opposition leader. Did she think then that her party would never be in the opposition again? What was on her mind when she said that?

So, why blame the BNP? We should blame the AL first for calling so many hartals. Khaleda Zia never said that they would not call any hartal. Finally, I want to say that we do not want any more hartal, as we, the common people, suffer the most during hartals. But at the same time, calling of a hartal is a democratic right of the opposition, only they have to practice this right judiciously.



PHOTO: STAR

Young generation needs guidance

We, the young people, are said to be the 'future' of the country, but I wonder how we will guide our country when we lack proper guidance. The adults say that we are now very modern and that we all have a Facebook account, but my question is what is the need of a Facebook account when we don't know the basics of life? We, especially the urban children, do not know how to swim, how to climb a tree, and some of us even don't know how to fold a cloth! 'Our children are our future' - that's what most of the politicians say but what are they doing to enlighten us with knowl-

edge? We don't have a ground to play or a useful TV channel to watch. Hence, we are forced to watch Hindi serials. And so, our talent as well as our interest to know is confined to the fast food shop and the internet. Only studying in schools cannot make us perfect human beings. The elders need to guide us properly, if they want us to guide the nation in the future. Otherwise, we will be nothing but a burden to the nation!
 Shafeen Mahmood
 Class IX (commerce)
 Little Jewels School
 Chittagong

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Tuesday's The Daily Star news report headlined "Executions Defended"

Mostafiz

Our foreign ministry and embassy in Riyadh could do more to save the eight people. I am very much shocked at the execution. The foreign ministry has made no comment even after four days of the execution. The government should protest this execution and compensate the victims' families.

Mohammad Hamid Hossain

If these eight people were European or American, could they behead them? They could not behead them because the US and the European countries are powerful. But as we are a poor nation, they could do this.

RCH

What was our embassy in Cairo doing? Did they go to the victim's family and tell them that not all of the eight people killed him? How about negotiating for the lives of the ones who did not hit the victim, by offering blood money? May be we could save seven of them. The problem is, under the KSA law, the killer and his/her accomplices are equally guilty of a murder.

Gopal Sengupta

The envoy wrongfully defended his government and its actions against our citizens. One example is well enough. Sampson, a Canadian citizen, was in jail on a murder charge and claimed that he was tortured while incarcerated, an accusation the Saudi authorities denied. He was released as the Saudi King granted him clemency. As a Bangladeshi Canadian, I find the Saudi envoy's defence farcical. The KSA's law is for the rich not for the poor.

Dr Karim

If they were Western or US citizens, the Saudi government would compromise, wouldn't it? How come eight people were beheaded for a single murder?

Husna

Human rights have not been denied to the workers. They were punished for killing a person. A Saudi killer was also beheaded in public with them that day. Those human rights organisations should first compare Saudi Arabia's murder and other crime rate with other countries' murder and crime rate. Sharia law is created by Allah, and it is worst for the criminals.

Nasarullah

Islam teaches tolerance, respect, perseverance and pardon contrary to what we see now. It is certainly true that Islam does not allow killing of innocents and of course, these people, if involved in murder, should be punished following the appropriate judicial procedure. The Saudi government could hand over the convicts to our government for trial, rather than beheading them in public as per the KSA laws.

PSC's innovative approach to plug question leakage

We have carefully read the article by Syed Fattahul Alim published in the Daily Star in October 3, 2011. The article dealt with leakage of question papers in public examinations of Bangladesh. There is, however, some factual inadequacy in this write up. Bangladesh Public Service Commission has conducted more than 300 written examinations in last four years. No complaint was heard about leakage of questions in any of these examinations. Bangladesh Public Service Commission has come up with some innovative methods in order to guard the secrecy and integrity of question papers. The commission makes sets of question papers for a particular examination. The commission selects one set of question paper through lottery just 25 minutes before examination and informs hall authorities by using all modern means of communication. In this method there is no scope for leakage of questions. The commission has succeeded in effectively arresting the pernicious trend of leakage of question papers.

For this the officers of the Commission had to work very hard under the guidance of the Commission. Officers and employees do their best to conduct the examination. At every step of examination the Commission ensures proper security. The mechanisms innovated by the Commission can be used as a model. If any institution or person feels interested to gather knowledge about the model of the commission, Bangladesh Public Service Commission will be prepared to help him in this regard.

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