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Uncontrolled increase in house rent

About 80 percent of around 15 million city dwellers are living in rented houses, according to the Daily Star's report. Most of them are helpless victims of this spike in house rent.

It has been observed that house rents increased alarmingly during the last 21 years, while the Dhaka City Corporation did not increase income tax. Moreover, the house owners increase the rent defying the House Rent Control Act, 1991. The Act says that house owners can not arbitrarily increase rents or evict their tenants without prior notice. They have to sign an agreement with the tenants before renting out their houses and provide tenants with rent receipts.

Many tenants bear with the owners' illogical actions fearing that the house owners will tell them to vacate their house. And it is very hazardous to shift a house nowadays. Ultimately, the house owners have the upper hand.

However, we are expressing solidarity with the National Citizens' Society (NCS) of Dhaka and other bodies of all other towns of Bangladesh, through which people can uphold their demand for enforcing the law to halt the uncontrolled increase in house rent. We hope the authorities concerned will do the needful in this regard soon.

Mobarak Ali
RK Mission Road
Gopibagh, Dhaka

Community gyms

Today's youths are spending their leisure time watching TV, browsing internet, and talking on mobile phones. They have no scope of having some physical exercise. I think the government can build community gyms for the youths, charging a small amount of money from them. Private gyms are expensive for many. Students cannot afford it. If the government takes the initiative, I am sure many youths will develop the healthy habit of exercising, instead of wasting their time idly. The community gym will encourage many to leave their lethargic life style and become active. In old Dhaka, there are a few community gyms and I have witnessed many youths of the locality are using the gym facilities with enthusiasm. The community gyms can create awareness among the youth about the benefits of staying active and it will also help the youth fight against drug addiction.

Mohammed Sohel Hara
Adamjee EPZ

Potato as a basic staple

My heart goes out to the potato growers and the glut of their unsold produce. Potatoes are in some countries the staple part of most meals! They can be cooked in many delicious ways and are much more nutritious than rice! Bangladeshi potatoes are not only available and cheap, they are among the best I have ever tasted!

As a child, during World War II and afterwards, I learnt to eat what was available and affordable. How can ideas about food be set in concrete? Why not replace the tyranny of personal preference by a more flexible response to present day realities and the needs of others?

Does Bangladesh lack what used to be called in the UK a Potato Marketing Board? It is now the Potato Council and run by the growers themselves. Many countries have them (see websites) which promote potatoes, through advertising, including publicising recipes.

Ask a famous Bangladeshi chef to produce a recipe for school dinners. Keep creamy mashed potatoes in the fridge for hungry teenagers who add their own extras!

It would make a big difference to the well-being of many Bangladeshi farmers, if each household agreed to have one main meal a week with potatoes instead of rice! How about The Daily Star and other newspapers publishing recipes?

Angela Robinson
Gulshan, Dhaka

New civil society platform launched

The news of the formation of a platform of the civil society has obviously encouraged the people. The honest and capable persons should come forward to put pressure both on the government and the opposition so that they may discharge their duty towards the nation honestly and sincerely.

The party in power should not have the wrong notion that people have given them the right to do whatever they feel like to do for five years. It is the people at the grassroots who make the major contribution to build the nation. Now it is time we did something for them.

I salute Barrister Rafiqul Haque for giving his consent to lead such a movement. He may not get enough time to complete the work, but the seed he has sown will become a big tree one day.

Dr. Khairuddin Barkat
Bashundhara R/A
Dhaka

The world we live in

The world population is increasing fast. The rich are getting richer and the poor are becoming poorer. There is a mad rush for power and wealth everywhere. The prices of essential commodities are rising and the sufferings of the majority people are beyond description.

How and when will we be able to establish a world based on equality, where the poor and the rich will enjoy equal rights and honour? The UN has failed to deliver its promised services: protecting human rights, freedom, food for all, accommodation, health care, education and justice for all.

O.H. Kabir
Hare Street
Wari, Dhaka

Acknowledging source of a reference material used in a post-editorial in The Daily Star

From: Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA)

This refers to the article titled "Combating trafficking in women and children" by Salma Ali, Executive Director-BNWLA, that appeared in The Daily Star on Friday, September 30 on page 15.

Unfortunately, we had done unintentional mistake of not quoting reference in this article. This will be very much helpful, if you could kindly publish the following statement as reference of that published article:

"A few paragraphs of the article titled "Combating trafficking in women and children" published on 30 September 2011 have been quoted from the regional study titled "Review of the SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking of Women and Children for Prostitution and the Current Status of Implementation" by IOM and funded by ADB, October 2009. This citation was inadvertently omitted and the error is deeply regretted."

Your cooperation in this regard will be highly appreciable.

Look forward to your continuous cooperation.

Salma Ali
Executive Director
BNWLA

Need for strong agro-marketing infrastructure



Agricultural production in the country has increased remarkably and our agricultural system has been shifted from traditional system to modern scientific system. But unfortunately, every year farmers are sustaining huge loss plus much agricultural produces are perishing due to lack of appropriate and adequate marketing facilities.

Usually, the agricultural extension personnel during the process of introducing a new technology, motivate the farmers to boost production. Accordingly, the farmers adopt the technology and apply their hard labour to boost production. But it pains us severely when we find news in the electronic and print media that farmers are in a helpless condition with their huge agricultural produces because they do not have buyers to sell their products.

I strongly feel that immediate interventions are needed to set up agricultural marketing networks in the country which would ensure storage, transportation, and export facilities for the agricultural produces.

True, the government is trying its best to help the farmers by giving subsidies and other technical support with its limited resources. Bangladesh being an agro-based economy, every citizen has a responsibility in building an effective agricultural marketing network through development of necessary infrastructure including local power generation facilities. And to accomplish this goal, the government may impose nominal levies on certain items so that adequate fund can be raised for agricultural development.

Professor M Zahidul Haque
Department of Agricultural Extension & Information System
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Dhaka

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Sunday's The Daily Star report headlined "Stop war crimes trial"

Amdem

This is an extremely unreasonable demand and should not be heeded. There is no denying the fact that serious crimes were committed during our Liberation War. Those who were really involved in crimes should be tried and Khaleda Zia should not prevent the court from trying them. Let the court do its work.

RMS

All patriotic Bangladeshis want the war crimes trial. But the Awami League (AL) government has turned it into a farce. The defendants are not being allowed to hire or consult with the lawyers of their choice.

AKM Moinuddin

Shame on the Opposition party!

Raihan Sharif

BNP might have a point in saying that some aspects of the tribunal may be given a second look. But it is making a huge political blunder by asking that the proceedings be stopped. It goes on the record that it wants to save the skins of the murderers of 1971 and is betraying the freedom fighters. There are many ways of asking that the trial be revised procedurally, but this is a wrong way and for Barrister Moudud Ahmed to become the spokesman for that is doubly wrong.

Naabaj

People of Bangladesh and those abroad are no more confused. They now know who perpetrated atrocities on Bangladeshi people and the freedom fighters. Please come forward to ward off these enemies before they again exterminate the rest of us.

Koyes

The AL is doing a great service by prosecuting these monsters. But a fair trial is a must.

Anonymous

The problem is with the quality of the tribunal and the qualifications of the judges that has made the whole process of the trial unacceptable. Even if the culprits are known, a due process of international standard must be maintained.

Anonymous

This is absurd. The Awami League has come to power with the people's mandate to try the war criminals. It is already late, and the nation can not wait any longer for justice. The government must gear up the pace of the trial.

A citizen

By demanding stoppage of the war crimes trial and siding with the collaborators who committed crimes against humanity during our Liberation War, the BNP has proved once again that it does not truly believe in our Liberation War. Their demand to stop the war crimes trial is a blatant disrespect for the millions of martyrs who sacrificed their lives.

Splitting of DCC

It is apparent that the government has taken the decision of splitting Dhaka City Corporation into two in a haste. I do not know whether the decision is right or wrong, but the way the government has handled the issue has raised questions in people's mind. They should have taken the opinion of the experts in this regard, and they still have time to reconsider the decision.

Why can't our politicians sit and talk before bringing any major changes? Taking people's opinion could have made the whole thing transparent and the government would have looked wise, considerate and democratic-minded. The people of Bangladesh have given the government a huge mandate, and so they have high expectations from it.

Anyone can make a mistake by taking a wrong decision, but it is only the wise and honest people who change their decisions.

Mohammed Sohel Hara
Shahjadpur
Dhaka

Open execution

Much has been discussed about the open execution. Some countries term it a barbaric act, while several other countries are using it to punish certain kinds of offences. The most merciful Allah (sub) allows capital punishment as a last resort for the security and peace of the society.

The death penalty can be given only for some specific crimes, such as murder. Despite having 99% literacy rate, the USA has highest crime rates and it is 139 times more than Saudi Arabia. In UK 1 in every 10 persons, in USA 1 in every 25 persons, and in KSA 1 in every 320 persons commits a crime. Let us follow the divine rule and establish a peaceful society.

Md. Hafizur Rahman
Renata Limited
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