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A clean Dhaka: Just a dream?



A very benevolent president indeed!

We learned that in the last three years President Zillur Rahman has pardoned twenty one people who were sentenced to death in different cases. According to Home Minister Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, four others who were on a death row got presidential clemency during the period of 1972 to 2008. Only four people were pardoned in the span of thirty-six years, while President Zillur Rahman pardoned twenty one people in three years! We are feeling dumb with disbelief.

Home Minister Sahara Khatun has been replaced by Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir but the law and order in the country, instead of improving, is sliding downward. All the criminals who got president's clemency belong to the ruling party; again they will resort to their evil ways.

I remember a parent, whose son was murdered, but the murderer got presidential clemency. The parent threw a question to the president: "Would the president forgive the murderer of his wife Ivy Rahman?" I do not know if President Zillur Rahman has got any answer to this question.

As the president of Bangladesh he has an obligation to the people; he cannot ignore it to please some quarter.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong

VVIPs move, commuters suffer

The other day, my family and I had to encounter a painful experience due to the traffic congestion resulting from "VVIP movement". My son was due for his O'Level examination at the British Council in Dhaka University area. However, as soon as we reached Karwan Bazar (in front of The Daily Star), traffic movement halted due to VVIPs. At this point, my son started to walk from Karwan Bazar to British Council and he was late by 15 minutes for an exam that is perhaps the most important one he will ever sit for. Later I learned that many students could not even reach British Council early enough. To my sheer disappointment, I convey this message to all in our administration: "Please do not make our lives miserable". I hope in future our prime minister and all VVIPs would think before moving around like a in this way and make everyone stand still on an already congested road.

Arifur Rahman

I have written articles over and over again about how people indiscriminately dump rubbish at their own will. The Daily Star even cares enough to print pictures in their pages about how filthy our city is but everyone including the government seems to turn a blind eye to it. The politicians don't seem to care. Why is it so? Is it because their neighbourhood is clean? Why is it that the Dhaka City Corporation never gets a performance evaluation and no one is held responsible for this? Someone even cared enough to write about the dangers of dust in the city but did anyone even care enough to read that article? I have so many questions which I know will probably never be answered. All I know is that I dream of living in a clean Dhaka but this will only remain a dream unless the people in power actually wake up and do something about it.

Minur Rahim
New DOHS, Mohakhali
Dhaka

Caught on Wall St

The elite white liberal establishment is a minority. The white poor is not part of that. The white working class is not part of that. If you really want to talk about being dependent on government, \$16 trillion for Wall Street, not one of them gone to jail involved in the criminal activity linked to predatory lending, market manipulation or insider trading.

The government protects them. Jamal gets caught with a crack bag; he is going to jail. But Mr. McGillicuddy gets caught on Wall Street; he's protected by the government. Neither administration -- Bush, Obama -- have any investigations, no prosecutions at all.

So the folk who are really dependent get interest-free loans from the Federal Reserve. Wouldn't it be nice if students could get interest-free loans? We're living in a society where everybody is up for sale. Everything is up for sale. They have sold their souls for a mess of Obama pottage.

Is he going to put himself on the line for poor people? Is he going to have an honest conversation about drones? To assassinate American citizens based on executive power? That's not that is authoritarian. That's autocratic. That's crypto-fascist!

Ted Rudow III, M.A
Encina Ave
Palo Alto, CA

We want safety on the road

Nowadays criminals walk freely on the streets. And we the normal citizens have to hide like fugitives. Thieves, pickpockets, murderers, kidnappers, etc. are there all over the country. Our law enforcing agencies are sitting idly caring about none of this. Sometimes, the ruling party activists are involved in all these mischievous activities and the law enforcers are ordered not to take action against them. It's the right of every citizen of Bangladesh to get safety from the government. We demand safety while walking on the streets.

Ahmed As Sami
Anandiketan School

Police show tolerance



I fully endorse Ahmed As Sami's letter entitled "Exemplary act of a traffic officer" published in your daily dated November 5, 2012. Recently, we saw photo clippings in The Daily Star of activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and Chhatra Shibir vandalising vehicles, setting motorcycles on fire, hurling brickbats at police and vandalising police van, etc. We saw picture of a Jaamat activist hitting a cop with the rifle snatched from him.

We must appreciate the patience of the policemen while on duty. They could have retaliated, but they kept cool. What a great sense of responsibility and dedicated service to the nation! It's about time we saw such good things from also others in responsible position in our country. Hats off to Bangladesh Police Force. These police officers should be given letter of appreciation and rewards by the authorities concerned.

Jamshaid Taher
Banani
Dhaka

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Sunday's The Daily Star news report headlined "70pc revenue pilfered"

Iftikhar-ul-Awwal

Wholesale plundering of state funds occurred in the state-run Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited (BTCL) is a shocking revelation. When national income tax collection is 1,700 crores a year, the BTCL officials gobble up nearly 2,800 crores annually. The criminals hiding among the BTCL staff have also managed to erase 70% call records.

We have got to recover the pilfered funds, smash the racketeers and ensure exemplary punishment to the culprits. In case the offenders fail to refund the stolen property, all their moveable and immovable assets need to be confiscated applying the sternest measures as per our statute books. I am sure the entire nation is waiting with abated breath to see the response of the government.

M. K. Alam

It is horrible that the embezzlement of such big government funds was done with the blessings of the minister concerned.

Sengupta, Canada

Where are we living? One after another, our state-owned institutions are losing revenues and the powerful people are embezzling the money. Only investigations are not enough. Now is the time to bring them to justice.

Anonymous

Thanks to The Daily Star for the story. But you would be amazed to know that now there is a horiloot (plundering) going on in this sector in the name of IGW. A few of the new IGW started taking advantage of the 3 months credit facilities given by the BTRC and selling minutes in less than 1.5 cents a minute. Their target is to take the 3 months of credit plus another 3 months of extended credit facilities and take all the money in 6 months and go out of business. In this process, they will be able to draw more than 2,000 crore from the market whereas they had only a deposit of 15 crore to the BTRC.

Ironically, these new IGWs are the same people who acted as carriers in the BTCL and siphoned off the money. They just took the IGW license in different name and ownership.

MH Khan

I am a non-resident Bangladeshi. I make VOIP calls back home to my family. The idea is to save money and I use more than one operators. I found to my surprise that many of those operators use Bangladesh Fire Brigade exchange for call

Raise your voice against corruption



Corruption in job recruitment process is an open secret in our country. People spend their valuable time and money for education. But when they look for a job, education seems to matter little; in many cases they hardly get the job without giving bribe. Sometimes they borrow money from others or even sell their land for giving bribe and become impoverished. After getting the job, they struggle to run their families and pay debts and so get frustrated. Journalists and the civil society members should raise their voice against corruption to solve this problem.

Md. Lutfur Rahman
Chandipasha, Nandail
Mymensingh

Parents who need counselling...

What a relief that the idea of giving MP's children special rights of admission to schools has been cancelled!

I would not have been over 6 years as a Principal/Head in Bangladeshi-run English medium schools, if I did not love your children to bits - but they can be very naughty! It is no secret that a fair percentage of 'Boro Lok' (Big People) here have used unfair means to reach that status and so you can imagine what some of their children are like! Some consider cheating, lying and bullying - maybe via anonymous calls on mobiles - as normal! Stealing from the school library the winning folder of last year's project on 'Rivers of Bangladesh' and taking it home to photocopy can happen in Class 2.... In one Class 5 the bigger girls got the smaller ones to do their homework and an excellent Form Prefect complained that girls from another class were entering her classroom to teach her girls how to cheat!

When a Class 6 girl stole the exam fee money from a teacher's bag and hid it, to punish her for not entering her for the Bengali Poetry Reading Competition, I felt out of my depth and reported this to my Owner/Principal. She called in the parents who then visited me. "Why did you tell her before you told me?" the father said. "Do you know who I am? I will take you to court!" These parents needed family counselling to see why their only child behaved so - and should have been grateful. So often it is not the kids' fault...

Thus, in too many schools, offences are swept under the carpet for fear that parents will use their 'influence' to get teachers dismissed because any discipline is seen as prejudice - as is refusing to make tests so easy that any pupil can get top marks! Thank God, schools will not be faced with the prospect of even more parents to threaten them - and other pupils - if they do not get what they want! This cloud has passed but those that remain remind us of the extra support teachers need if they are to do their job properly.

Angela Robinson

On e-mail

STB for digitisation of CTV!

A Set-top Box (STB) also called Set-top Unit (STU) or Cable Box is an electronic device used to decode digital signals from the satellite so that it can be viewed on a traditional TV set (mostly under analogue system now).

Recently the Indian authorities have made digitization of Cable Television (CTV) mandatory under "The Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2011" passed last year in the Lok Sabha. Initially the law has been implemented in four major metropolis of India including Mumbai and Kolkata. The TV viewers need to install a Set-top Box for each TV set to view cable television programmes.

The Set-top Box not only helps in digitization of cable television signals but also ensures better picture and sound quality. This system will ensure transparency in the entire cable television operation which includes accurate reporting of subscriber numbers and revenue.

Meanwhile as studies revealed, the Set-top Box has a drawback because it consumes more power than even a refrigerator. As such the electricity bill will increase. It requires keeping the STB switched off when not in use although during off state the STB fails to record updates.

In spite of certain limitations, set-top box is still important for digitization of cable television system. Bangladesh may consider introducing STB.

Professor M Zahidul Haque

Dean, Faculty of Agriculture

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