

# Create a department for children



A.M.AHAD / DRINKNEWS

We have learnt from recent articles of this daily that there is no coordination among the activities of Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, National Council for Women and Child Development, other governmental bodies and NGOs in the works for protecting child rights.

The government has neither established a separate department nor appointed an ombudsman yet for children. But the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended about three years back to set up a Department for Children to protect their rights. Moreover, the government in its National Children Policy, 2011 has created the legal provision to appoint an Ombudsman for children. We are disappointed after knowing from various sources that the government has no immediate plan to take any initiative regarding this matter.

We urge the government not to go for wrong policies like expanding branches of Bangladesh Shishu Academy (BSA) for a show-off. It must be remembered that the BSA is well-known for its activities of cultural development that do not cover the whole range of rights of children.

Anyway, we are endorsing the opinions of those who say that not only a department, rather a separate ministry for children is the demand of the time. We hope the government would be really sincere to protect child rights by adopting the right and effective steps.

**Mobarak Ali**  
RK Mission Road  
Gopibagh, Dhaka

## Tunnel under Karnaphuli river!

The Chinese interest shown on this matter was reported in the pages of an English daily on 12th. November. It was an interesting and attractive proposition. The matter when presented to the authorities should be seriously looked into, and if otherwise financially sound, taken up on an urgent basis. Apart from anything else, it will reduce our need for imported liquid fuel, equipment, spares and manpower needed for operating ferries across many of our rivers. Once work on the Karnaphuli tunnel is taken up, we may consider this option wherever possible.

Such an option can replace ferries that are plying now, particularly for roads connecting Dhaka with Chittagong, Khulna, Sylhet, and other important cities all over Bangladesh. Tunnels could possibly be a better option than building bridges or operating ferries. Quite possibly, safety, weather related matters, maintenance, repair spare part, and fuel and lubrication costs for ferries will be permanently curtailed! Also the foundation and structural upkeep of bridges, if built of steel, can be a regular cost issue, due to atmospheric and river corrosion and other similar matters.

**Engr. S.A. Mansoor**  
Dhaka

# Remove billboards causing visual pollution

I refer to the news item published in the DS dated November 15 regarding illegal billboards in Chittagong. These huge billboards not only destroy the beauty of a city but also divert the attention of the vehicle drivers resulting in serious accidents. The advertising companies who build the billboards in collusion with the city corporation have been creating this nuisance since last two decades.

The only way to get rid of these illegal billboards in metropolitan cities is by imposing heavy fines by the Department of Environment (DoE) on companies who advertise their products and services. The Department of Environment should get into action and stop these visual pollutions. I appreciate the Department of Environment which has become active in imposing heavy fines on factories and brickfields for polluting the environment and rivers.

I feel sad to see the way these multi-national companies and service providers spend millions of taka on advertising. In fact these companies should cut down their advertising funds and donate fund for poverty alleviation and development of villages in Bangladesh. It may not be out of place to say that the Ministry of Health has at least done a good job by banning all advertisements by tobacco companies in Bangladesh.

**Ziauddin Ahmed**  
On e-mail



PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

## Tamim not Test player

From the way Tamim batted on the second day of the Bangladesh-West Indies Test, it has become very much clear that he lacks the temperament to play the longer version of cricket. No doubt, he is good for one-day cricket as well as for T-20 cricket, but not for the Test cricket. He has already played quite a good number of Test crickets 24 in number but yet could not learn the essence of it. It seems he will never learn it. So next time when the Bangladesh cricket bosses will select a Test cricket team, they must think twice before choosing Tamim. If playing only flamboyant shots is his style, then well and good. But he must not play Test cricket. We may not win, but we may at least draw a Test. After twelve years of achieving Test status, if we still say we are learning, that is not acceptable any more.

**Faruque Hasan**  
Alaol Avenue, Uttara  
Dhaka

## US election a lesson for our politicians

US election was successfully ended following a month-long media storm across the world. Re-elected president Barack Obama said in his victory speech that he would talk to Mr. Romney about how they can work together to move US forward. On the other hand, Mr. Romney was quick to congratulate Obama and wish him success as US president.

We have witnessed an exchange of true political courtesy from these two candidates. Our politicians should learn this culture of courtesy. This is the essence of true democracy.

**Saumitra Sarder**  
Advocate  
Dhaka Judges Court  
Dhaka

## Expectations from president Obama

Congratulations to Barack Obama for getting re-elected as the president of the US for another four-year term. Like many other developing countries of the world, we too have expectations from the president. We expect to see something new this time from Obama. This time we want to see some upfront measures taken by him that would stop children from crying for their missing parents in the battlefields, would bring smile to the frightened people of the war-torn countries. Any problem can be solved peacefully, if there is honest will. So, we are waiting to see some very positive gestures from the Nobel laureate president while dealing with foreign issues. Hope he will not let us down.

**Md. Ahsanul Kabir Palash**  
Department of Marketing  
University of Dhaka

# Unhygienic foods in restaurants



PHOTO: STAR

One day I bought some shingaras and noodles from an eatery, which smelled odd. I will not buy anything from there again as I happened to see the unhygienic environment of the kitchen. People eat tehari as lunch in this eatery but they do not know what is behind the scene. If you take a close look, you will see that most of the eateries have the same unhygienic kitchen. The outlets look okay. The shingaras and puris look mouth-watering. But just behind the doors, foods are cooked in unhygienic environment. The water that is used for cooking curries, rice and tehari is full of deadly germs. Moreover, the same old oil is used over and over again. A piece of shingara goes well with a cup of tea at your office or while sitting in your balcony and enjoying the evening. But the way those snacks are cooked is dangerous for health. After seeing this, I would not buy anything from those places again. Would you?

**Cantara Wali**  
On e-mail

## Dissolve parliament, get a fresh mandate

Bangladesh seems to have become a hotbed of unprincipled politics. The ethical standards of the politicians, irrespective of the party to which they belong, have reached a nadir. The people of Bangladesh have been witnessing mud-slinging matches between the ruling and opposition parties far too long. They have never come together to share power. If numbers alone matter, there is no future for moral standards in politics. Now, in our parliament, political differences have turned into personal animosities. Moreover, it appears that the opposition lawmakers have forgotten their duties as responsible parliamentarians. The passing of many bills are getting expedited without any debate because of their boycott. It is time they called off the boycott.

What is happening in Bangladesh is a mockery of our political system. Political morality is no less important than constitutional propriety. Parties should not be allowed to get legal sanction for unprincipled politics in the name of safeguarding democracy and the constitution. The dissolution of the parliament and fresh elections are the best course of action to be followed now.

Even if the 'international community' invites both the political parties to form a government, what is the guarantee that each political party will continue to extend support to the government till the end of its term? Instead of pushing the state into turmoil, is it not better for all parties to seek a fresh mandate and leave the issue of cleansing the political system to the wisdom of the electorate?

**Gopal Sengupta**  
Canada

## READERS respond

*Here are some comments that came in response to Tuesday's The Daily Star news report headlined "TIB flayed at Sangsad"*

### Anis Sabeth

TIB's sample is not representative. There are lots of MPs who are honest and work for the people. To whom is TIB accountable?

### L J Pereira

For conducting a research, a methodology is developed and applied, and tools are selected to complete the research. Researchers analyse the findings using scientific tools and process and come to conclusions whether the findings are reliable, partially reliable or biased. TIB has conducted a research and presented the findings; it is not anyone's personal opinion. I do not find it rational for the MPs to get angry at the findings. I believe the parliament has more important issues to deal with. We expect that our respected parliamentarians would react or speak based on facts.

### N. Alamgir

I think the majority of the public would like to sing in unison with the TIB. The report only reflects what the public think. Only the privileged ruling class and their cohorts would want to ban TIB for their honest and just report. Surely there are honest and hardworking leaders but they are very few in number. That is why the report mentions of 97 percent and not 100 percent.

### MAS Molla

Dear MPs, please shun the 'holier-than-thou' attitude. People know all about you.

### AJK

I want to ask Anis Sabeth, who are those honest MPs? Can you name them for our understanding?

### M. Imam Uddin

I think TIB is not doing anything wrong. They are working as a watchdog only. As a former employee of TIB, I believe they would like to see the Ninth Jatiya Sangsad as a truly effective parliament. The Ninth Parliament has come into being with a pledge to establish a corruption-free and well-governed Bangladesh.

### Shamim

Why don't the MPs submit their wealth statement? Why are they afraid of doing so? They never brought a bill in the parliament about submitting their wealth reports. They think they are above the law. They always forget that people made them lawmakers and they are accountable to people. If TIB is wrong, everyone will be more than happy. MPs should prove that TIB is wrong.

### Jumana Sarwar

The TIB report did not reveal anything new. It simply confirmed the perception of the nation with an investigative report. Targeting people for different views and threatening to ban and prosecute them for speaking the truth is not the spirit of democracy.

### Iftikhar-ul-Awwal

It is a natural reaction of the parliamentarians to defend their honour badly damaged by a true report (perhaps it could have been a little broader based) prepared and published by the international watchdog, TIB. People's perception is more or less reflected in the report. We feel that more such reports may be compiled on other vital institutions of the country. This will have some corrective impact on the operation of those organisations. One needs not worry about the government which finds fault everywhere excepting with themselves and their golden boys (who often even beat their teachers at universities).

### Dr. Nazmul Haq