

# Blood versus Boom

FOUNDER EDITOR  
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## Further marginalising the marginalised

### Facilities must reach their intended target

IRREGULARITIES and nepotism by local government representatives have disappointingly become a burden on marginalised people who are failing to benefit from society safety net programmes because of such practices. Some corrupt officials at the local government level, as reported by this newspaper on Monday, are criminally deceiving the marginalised, who are often unaware of their rights, and denying them of government facilities. We condemn this denial of the most basic facilities to those who need it the most, particularly when it is inclusivity that is called for in general and especially in regards to the marginalised.

This is particularly true in the times we are in. Despite the strides we have made in terms of development, there are those who are still left in a lurch. It is our moral obligation to ensure development that is inclusive in nature because that is what will benefit the nation most, as a whole, in the long run. Social harmony also calls for inclusivity for all, as the more we marginalise sections of society, the more social instability we will eventually have to deal with.

Most importantly, the government facilities in place for the marginalised are being provided using taxpayer's money as it is a social and cultural value of our people to contribute towards the well being of the less fortunate. It is a noble inclination which is shamefully being extinguished by these corrupt officials and their excessive greed.

The authorities must immediately bring an end to such criminality. Educating and making the marginalised aware of their rights is in order but the authorities must also maintain strict monitoring to root out corruption.

## Lifts become death traps

### Building safety authority needed

DHAKA city is urbanising at a rapid rate. Lifts have now become an essential prerequisite for high rise buildings for both commercial purposes and residences. Thousands of lifts are being commissioned without proper supervision due to a dearth of qualified technical personnel. On top of that the mandatory safety checks and regular maintenance needed to keep these lifts operating properly are being sidelined due to building owners' lack of awareness and minimising costs. The dangers of cost cutting and lack of maintenance were perhaps best illustrated when the cable pulling a lift in an Uttara shopping mall snapped, hurling people to their deaths some months ago.

It is high time a separate body was formed under the aegis of Rajdhani Unnayan Kattiripakkha (Rajuk) whose primary job would be to oversee mechanical, electrical and structural safety of buildings. This body would have inspectors that would carry out regular audits on buildings to ensure that buildings are built adhering to the national building code and equipment such as lifts are being maintained as per prescribed criteria.

It is imperative that both building owners and users of lifts in buildings learn about how important it is to maintain these vertical movers of people. Overcrowding seems to be a regular affair in lifts where we forgo our personal safety to use elevators. At the end of the day, it is a joint responsibility of building owners and authorities to see to it that proper installation and maintenance of lifts is done in the interests of public safety.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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### We want to breathe pure air

The air in Hazaribagh is seriously polluted. With residential houses and tannery factories cohabiting in the same area, smoke from the factories, bad odour from raw hides, and the onslaught of flies attracted to the hides make it a very difficult environment to live in. Pedestrians and students of nearby schools face the worst of it while walking by.

I urge the concerned authorities to look into the matter.

Iqbal Khan  
Hazaribagh, Dhaka

### Tips for the Tigers



Congratulations to the Tigers, Mashrafe in particular, for a brilliant win. When England were 31 for 4 after 10 overs, we started to believe that Bangladesh could pull off an unlikely win, and when Moeen Ali was dismissed in the 27th over with the score at 120-6, the game seemed firmly in the Tigers' grip.

But then Butler scored a run-a-ball 57. He was largely able to do this by making room for himself and coming down the crease to get to the pitch of the ball, which allowed him to hit the shots. Our bowlers should have adjusted their line and length to throw him off his shots or even get him out.

Regardless, I am positive that our boys will definitely put up a stellar performance in the 3rd ODI to win the series.

Moinuddin M Nasrullah  
Lalmatia, Dhaka



**KNOT SO TRUE**  
RUBANA HUQ

AFTER the second US presidential debate, which was aired less than 48 hours ago, nothing is a political surprise anymore. Elections in South Asia used to be termed as farcical; South Asian leaders were called temperamentally intolerant and as a region, it also used to be called the hopeless/hapless third world. Well... not anymore. The latest presidential race in the US has set or rather unset all democratic comparisons anywhere in the world.

Therefore, the latest situation of the Indo-Pak borders being redrawn in blood is no more unexpected. The fact that in the Parliament, Bharatiya Janata Party leader and former home secretary RK Singh openly shared that India should have attacked Pakistan after December 13, 2001 does not come as a surprise. The fact that India has also made it clear that the Line of Control (LoC) will no longer be sacrosanct for India if Pakistan continues to "export terrorists" is also part of the predicted route. The game goes on. On the other hand, on September 29, when Indian troops crossed over to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs instantly argued that CNN News18 has televised a "forged" interview of police officer of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, in which he has allegedly confirmed India's surgical strikes. Apparently, the Indian surgical strikes were pure constructs of the Indian imagination!

Amidst all these claims and blames, and while bombs go off in Pakistan at routine intervals, the international organization "Emerging Markets" declared Pakistan the 'Best Country for Infrastructure Development in South Asia,' according to a publication of the IMF/World Bank Annual Meeting 2016. Pakistan has won this award for launching various mega

projects, including China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, Liquefied Natural Gas Pipeline, Lahore to Karachi railway line, power generation plants and industrial zones. Authorities of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have also declared Ishaq Dar, the best Finance Minister in South Asia of 2016. With so many accolades, the political circus clouds the region, with SAARC getting called off with most South Asian countries backing off, putting, quite deservedly, Pakistan in an alienated cornered position. China, however, stands with

region has greatly benefitted from global integration. With share of industry leaping from 18 percent to 29 percent between 1960 to 2013, the region has gained prominence of global value chains. In spite of relatively low product sophistication, by 2030, South Asia could triple its export share of electronics and motor vehicles. If only the region could cut its cost price by 10 percent in apparel, then that could lead apparel exports to surge anywhere between 13 percent to 25 percent. In brief, this region does have "multiple pockets of excellence".

conquering controversy. For decades, we have witnessed Pakistani artists frequenting concerts in India and Indian artists crossing borders to cater to the Pakistani crowd. For as long as I can remember, many Indian boutiques have been proudly carrying the full range of Pakistani shalwar-kurtas. Forever, the cricket heroes of both the lands have been adored and worshipped in one breath. Very recently, it took me almost two months to get a Pakistani colleague to come and visit Dhaka for work. While his visit was absolutely a necessity, justifying his visit to the authorities was critical. What has actually gone wrong in the South Asian landscape? If one singles Pakistan out in this South Asian equation, one then naturally wonders, why the leaders of a single country that is projected to take off as the next investment friendly area, are unwise to jeopardise regional integration that could turn South Asia to record the highest GDP growth by 2030? South Asia is projected to have a substantial increase in per capita to USD 3,400 by 2030. World Bank study further predicts skilled workers to rise by 84 percent, the real GDP in the region to rise by 6 percent every year, merchandise export to rise by 264 percent in 2030 from what it was in 2011.

Amidst all these promises, one must also not forget the bitter 2011 experience of Samsung backing out from Bangladesh, with its USD 1.25 billion investment, when we could not offer 250 acres of land in the export processing zone that it had asked for, in order for Samsung to set up an electronics industry that would provide job opportunities for 50,000 people. Opportunities like this will just come and evaporate into thin air, if we do not address our infrastructural hiccups and improve governance in all sectors. Above all, if this region is to soar at all, we will all need to come together and build our bridge of faith, while the rest of the world seeps deeper into insanity. Time is ours to seize.

The writer is Managing Director, Mohammadi Group.

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Pakistan, with full vigour as the USD 46 billion trade route running from Pakistan's Gwadar port on the Arabian Sea to China's Xinjiang represents the "One Belt, One Road" initiative designed to help China expand its economic and political outreach in Asia.

Yet, amidst all the political somersaults and retaliations, the region moves on.

It is essential to sense and honour the South Asian potential. A recent report of the World Bank, which was launched focusing on South Asian competitiveness reveals many prospects that the region cannot ignore. The report examines four sectors including agriculture, apparel manufacturing, automotive industry and ICT proving a single point that the

What then is holding us back? I write "us" with a lot of hope and audacity of a South Asian. Why is regional integration still unlikely? Why is the intra-regional trade still less than 5 percent and has been so for decades? In spite of the zero tariff on the readymade garment sector, Bangladesh exported only USD 104.25 million in 2014-2015 to India, where non-tariff barriers hinder growth. Added to these barriers, there also exist other countervailing duties on other products from Bangladesh. With so many South Asian platforms existing on track 1,2,3 and even 4, why would our "Amanki Asha" be wasted on watching regional leaders thrusting the region to a dark pit of unreliability?

For years, we have watched culture

# Making development stronger than disaster

NICK BERESFORD, KHURSHID ALAM, and CATHERINE TRANBERG HAARSAKER

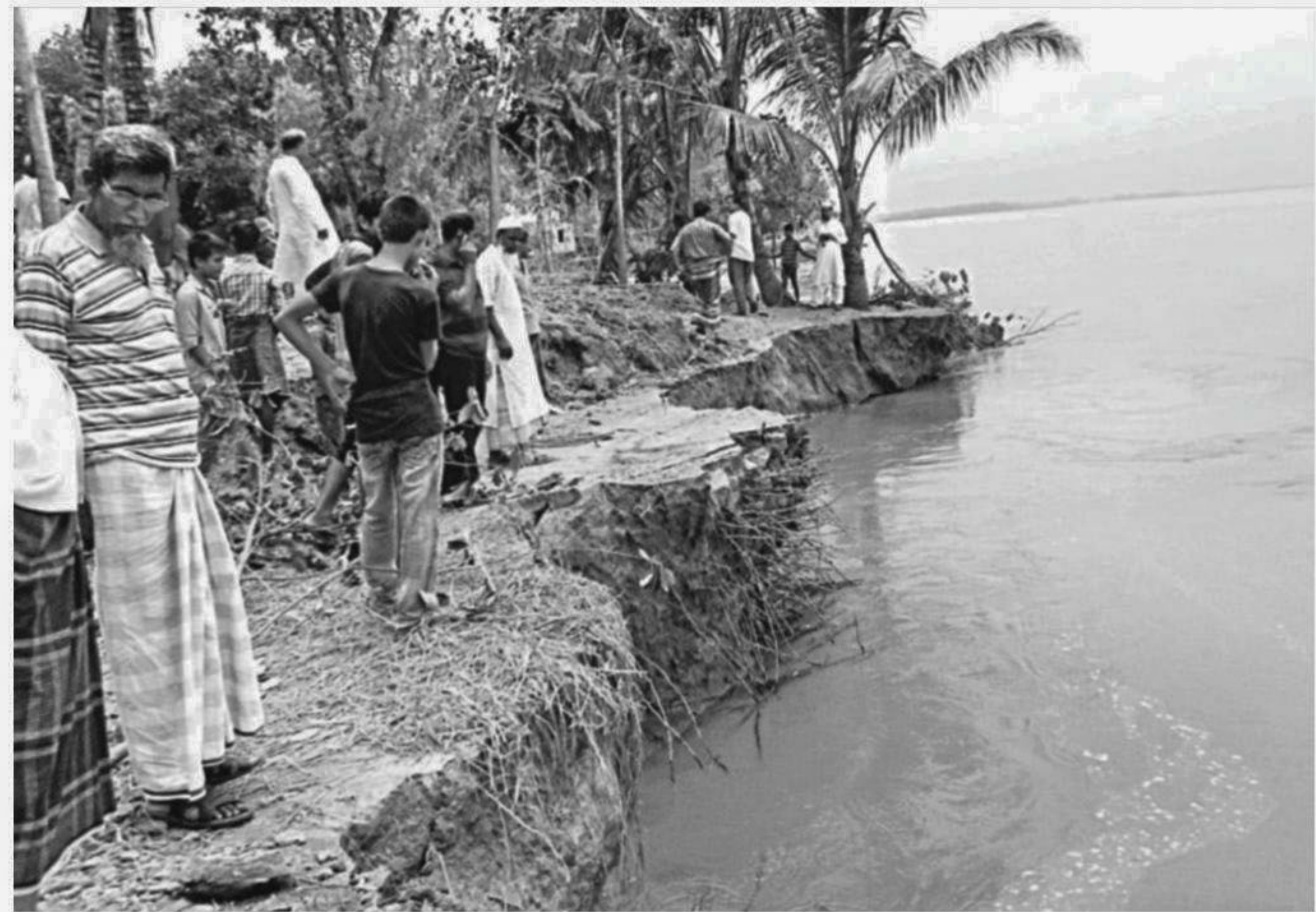
As an ascending middle income country, Bangladesh is seeing heavy investment – from government, companies, and private citizens sending remittances from abroad. Coupled with social development work, the result is that an unprecedented number of people are being lifted out of poverty, and are entering education, employment, and better lives every day. Supported by a well-functioning system for disaster warning and preparedness, the number of lives lost to disasters has never been so low.

With public and private investments facilitating growth and rapid improvement in the living standards of families across the nation, there is huge scope for risk reduction – but also risk accumulation. Only by managing disaster and climatic risks, can we make progress sustainable at household, community and national level. Otherwise, our growth and human development remains at risk from disaster shocks.

More is becoming known about earthquake risk to our cities; climate change heralds a change in intensity and frequency of cyclones and floods. This increased disaster risk is a major challenge to sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction. BBS' recent report on disaster statistics shows that 44 percent of households in disaster-prone areas have been affected more than once by disaster, and it is not difficult to see why there is an overlap between areas affected by disaster and pockets of extreme poverty. Repeated loss of housing and assets prevent families from leaving poverty behind.

Similarly, a major earthquake may hobble the national economic growth which is currently driving poverty reduction. The global economy does not wait for countries to recover from shocks; trade moves elsewhere. The garments sector in Sri Lanka lost investment and orders when the deadly conflict started in 1980s. Should a major earthquake disrupt production and supply chain in Bangladesh, the job security for 4.2 million people currently employed in the sector would be at risk.

To prevent a major cyclone or earthquake from permanently arresting the country's economic growth, or a seasonal flood from washing away the house and assets of a family, we must seize the momentum of progress, and safeguard our development gains – be they social, economic or infrastructural – by integrating resilience building into public and



People watch helplessly as the mighty Jamuna bursts its banks at Arjuna village in Tangail's Bhuapur.

PHOTO: STAR

private investment. We need new policies for a new context.

Firstly, we must reshape development and investment to ensure that it is informed by what we know about our past and future disaster risk. A culture of disaster risk sensitivity must be nurtured, so that officials, investors and politicians understand the possible impacts disaster may have on their project or business, and integrate steps to mitigate these risks. This means making disaster risk information accessible to all; providing incentives to private sector for making risk-informed investments; and ensuring that planners have the knowledge they need to assess and mitigate disaster risk in their plans and programmes.

Secondly, we must upgrade our capacity for disaster management and risk mitigation so that we are able to absorb the shock of a major cyclone or earthquake. Our disaster professionals and volunteers must be trained and equipped, our response systems ready and able. Bangladesh has already created internationally recognised methods of climatic disaster management by the people, through the Cyclone Preparedness Programme and community risk

assessments. We must now combine our experience with that of other countries, to create a model of earthquake risk management which builds the capacity of the people to reduce their risk and of government to respond.

Bangladesh is fortunate in that there are a number of structures within and outside the country which may support disaster resilience building. Although traditional development partner support is expected to decline in coming years, the strong culture of sharing and learning on disaster among countries in Asia provides vital input for government and practitioners continually improving our disaster risk management practices, including in the recovery phase.

Existing national programmes have the potential to deliver resilience dividends at a large scale, especially in the face of intensifying climatic disaster. Some of the most important developments in disaster risk reduction have come out of other sectors – look no further than the oral rehydration solution, which has been key in lowering post-disaster illness and mortality. We need to continue such innovation and make risk informed development the norm.

Similarly, projects and innovations carry within them the seed of our next step towards resilience. Imagine a Bangladesh where the work done through the government's social safety programmes is used to raise plinths in the flood-prone areas, or stabilise slopes and riverbanks against mudslides and erosion. Adaptive social protection can be used not only to help vulnerable families put food on the table, but also support them and their communities to build their resilience against future disasters.

Economic growth and poverty reduction cannot be sustainable if it is not also disaster resilient. Building national resilience to future disasters will require – from all of us, whether in development, government or the private sector – to consider disaster risk management as an integral part of our projects, businesses, and programmes, and to unlock the transformative potentials within. If we make our development resilient, the dividend will be sustainable growth, shared prosperity and fewer people losing lives, livelihoods, and assets.

The writers are Acting Country Director, Assistant Country Director and Programme Consultant of UNDP Bangladesh, respectively.