



With community ownership of trees in the cities, the authorities won't be able to cut trees down without citizen consensus. PHOTO: AMIRUL RAJIV

Community-based approach needed for environmental management in cities



Dr. Nawshad Ahmed, a former UN official, is an economist and urban planner.

NAWSHAD AHMED

Urban environmental management challenges are quite serious in Bangladesh due to unplanned urbanisation, and with no national policy to regulate it. The list of what ails our cities is quite long, but the preparation to tackle them by the local government and other responsible departments is lacking. Therefore, other actors should get involved in the environmental management of our cities, such as non-governmental organisations, private sector, and communities.

Due to rapid urban growth, rising per capita income and consumption, a high volume of solid waste is generated in the country every day. According to the available data, Dhaka city produces 6,448 tonnes of municipal solid waste per day – that's 0.57 kg per capita per day. The two Dhaka city corporations find it extremely difficult to collect and manage the waste generated every day, impacting public health and the city's environment. More than one-fourth of the city's solid waste remains uncollected.

In Dhaka and many other cities, a well-established community initiative that is taking shape is the residential solid waste collection programme. Households within a neighbourhood, on their own, engage waste collectors who go door to door to collect the waste at a fixed time every day and dump it in municipal waste collection points. Both the city corporations in Dhaka have established collection points in different parts from where the waste is taken to a central dumping ground. The communities who receive door-to-door service share the cost of waste collection by paying a monthly fee.

Another model of community-based solid waste management is being practised in about a dozen cities since 1995, developed by Waste Concern. Solid waste is collected from households, and after segregation, the organic portion is converted to

fertiliser. In Dhaka, about 80 percent of the household waste is organic. Community waste collectors separate items for recycling after collection or, in some cases, the households separate the waste and give it to the collectors, who then supply it to recycling factories.

Both the models of community-based solid waste management are quite successful. Following these examples, can we think of involving communities in addressing other environmental concerns of our cities? Take, for example, tree plantation. We know that the indiscriminate felling of trees in urban areas and failure to plant more are resulting in serious environmental consequences for the city residents. What happened in Dhanmondi's Satmasjid Road is a case in point. There has been a huge public outcry – environmental activists and urban planners have expressed their concerns over the felling of mature trees.

Shrinking green spaces threatens the liveability and sustainability of our cities. Urban areas are responsible for as much as 75 percent of all carbon dioxide emissions globally. In cities like Dhaka where the tree cover is low, people experience heat stress and suffer from increased air pollution. Planting more trees in open spaces, medians, around residential and commercial buildings, parks, school yards, homesteads and bus stops with community support and creating peri-urban forests can be a solution to rising urban temperatures. Evidence shows that over the last six decades, urban temperature has risen on average by about three degrees Celsius in five major cities – Dhaka, Chattogram, Rajshahi, Khulna, and Sylhet – where about 70 percent of the urban population of the country lives. Therefore, massive tree plantation must be urgently undertaken to cool down the atmosphere, which is facilitated by tree shading and evapotranspiration.

Tree shade prevents surfaces from heating eventually reducing surface temperature.

To promote urban tree plantation, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) launched an initiative called "Trees in Cities Challenge" in 2019. It invited mayors and local governments globally to make a tree planting pledge and set targets to make their cities greener, resilient and sustainable. Urban trees have remarkable environmental benefits, such as reducing pollution, cooling of atmosphere, and aids in recharging underground water levels by promoting rainfall. In the US, it has been found that dense urban trees offer localised cooling of temperature by as much as three degrees Celsius.

Trees in urban and peri-urban areas have economic, environmental and social benefits. By lowering the temperature, use of air conditioners can be reduced, saving valuable electricity. If planted in good numbers, trees can provide fuelwood, fruits and flowers; wood for building and fencing, fodder, medicines; and can protect soil and reduce noise and air pollution. Many families in Dhaka are undertaking rooftop gardening, thus providing a source of fresh vegetables regularly.

By involving communities in this process, responsibility for caring and watering trees on the streets may be given to local residents. This is not an impossible task if the community members have a shared vision, understand the value of voluntary contributions, and municipal councillors can convince them of the value of community participation and help build consensus. In Western countries and Africa, joint ownership of urban forests and community management of tree plantation programmes empower urban dwellers, and thus they have a say in all decisions regarding tree plantation, management, and cutting.

In Bangladesh, people's participation in all stages of social forestry projects (planning, designing, monitoring and harvesting) in rural areas enables them to resist unilateral felling of trees without consensus. In case of community ownership and joint management of trees in the cities, the city corporations will have to follow the same kind of standard procedures to plant and manage trees.

The West should not meddle in Turkish affairs



A CLOSER LOOK

Tasneem Tayeb is a columnist for The Daily Star. Her Twitter handle is @tasneem_tayeb

TASNEEM TAYEB

Turkey is heading for a run-off election that many international media outlets are terming "knife-edge," and rightfully so, as vote banks are witnessing an almost 50-50 divide between both Erdogan's ruling party (AK Party) and CHP's Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu-led opposition coalition, called the Table of Six.

In the election held on May 14, neither of the two major candidates could secure more than 50 percent votes needed for a decisive victory – Erdogan secured 49.51 percent while Kılıçdaroğlu received 44.88 percent. The May 28 run-off is seen as a crucial moment in Turkey's recent history.

This particular election is turning into a nightmare for healthy democracy in the nation, with the prevalence of smear campaigns and political pressure. Take, for example, Muharrem Ince of Homeland Party pulling out at the last minute in the face of vile smear campaigns allegedly funded by the CHP party, or forcing some to return to the opposition coalition (Good Party's Meral Akşener was apparently forced to return to the Table of Six after she pulled out). But fingers have also been raised at foreign powers for meddling in the elections.

Erdogan has been very vocal about Western countries interfering in Turkish elections to put their "puppet" (Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu) in power. "It is a shame. What can you say if I tell you that the United States, Britain and Germany manipulate the elections?" Erdogan had said, slamming the West.

Interestingly, the West has good reasons to be wary of Erdogan. For

it comes to maintaining strategic relationships with China and Russia, and for obvious reasons. Both these countries are major power brokers, and Erdogan's decision to engage with them are purely based on Turkey's interests, which does not necessarily always align with the West's.

Another point of contention between the West and Erdogan is Turkey's veto power on Nato

suppressing dissent. But the simple question remains: who is the West to interfere in another sovereign, democratic nation's elections? Who is Joe Biden to call Erdogan an "autocrat"?

There is no denying that despite his limitations, Erdogan has immensely contributed to Turkey's development and given the nation much-needed political stability. He has given the nation a one-hundred-year vision – Century of Türkiye – to cherish and lead; and he has brought the much-needed balance between tradition and transformation – for which he is disliked by a section of Turkey's military.

It is understandable that Erdogan has led Turkey for long and change is needed. But what kind of change is Turkey looking at under the leadership of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu?



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan delivers a speech at the International Ombudsman Conference at the presidential complex in Ankara, Turkey, on January 11, 2023.

PHOTO: AFP

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one, in the aftermath of decades of military interventions and political unrest, during the two-decade rule of Erdogan, Turkey has come a long way in establishing itself as a key geopolitical player in Europe, Asia and the Middle East, and Erdogan's assertive foreign policy has challenged Western hegemony over the global order.

Erdogan – unlike many past leaderships – is no puppet of the West and has certainly not been docile to the West's demands. He maintains a pragmatic stance when

membership. Case in point: Turkey vetoed the membership attempts of Sweden and Finland in Nato. While Turkey has recently lifted its veto on the bid of one of these two nations, its relationship with both the countries has been rocky. With Finland, it was about the country's firearms embargo on Turkey post Syria intervention; with Sweden, it was Stockholm's perceived support for Kurdistan Workers' Party or PKK – and its affiliates – which Turkey considers a terrorist organisation and a threat to its national security.

Moreover, Turkey's muscle flexing in the Middle East and in global politics as a revisionist power – for instance playing a prominent role in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Eastern Mediterranean, brokering the Black Sea grain deal at the height of the Russia-Ukraine War – challenges the status quo and threatens the West's sphere of influence.

Naturally, Erdogan's anti-West stance has rendered him an eyesore for the West and led the Western media to brand him as an autocrat and attempt to turn the Turkish population – especially the youth – against him.

It is true that Erdogan is no saint and has his share of judgemental errors and high-handedness in

Kılıçdaroğlu is an inconsistent politician: on the one hand he has pledged "freedom and true democracy" and a "civilised world" to the people, and on the other, he woos the ultra-nationalist right-wing with promises to crack down on helpless migrants and refugees. He is lenient towards the controversial Islamist fraternal movement led by Fethullah Gülen – currently residing in the US – called FETÖ, while he calls out Erdogan for not protecting Turkey's borders by accommodating refugees from neighbouring war-torn countries.

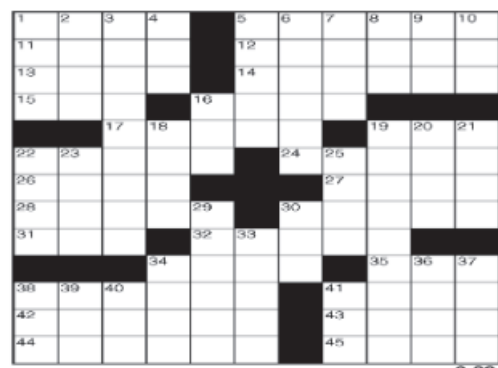
To put it mildly, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu seems unsure about his ideologies, ethos and policies and might not be the right candidate to lead change.

"Change" is a contagious term. It has the ability to ignite passion among masses and fill them with hopes and dreams. But change under an inconsistent leader can be counterproductive.

Despite Western support for Kılıçdaroğlu and the propaganda against Erdogan, it is ultimately up to the Turkish people to decide which leader will lead them into the Century of Türkiye. The West should demonstrate integrity and leave it up to them to choose their leader in the run-off, without interference.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH


- ACROSS**
- 1 Scrub
 - 5 Parish leader
 - 11 Canyon sound
 - 12 Horse-related
 - 13 Stage item
 - 14 Didn't guzzle
 - 15 Player's peg
 - 16 Accomplishment
 - 17 Knitted wrap
 - 19 Spoil
 - 22 "Over There!" writer
 - 24 Teatime treat
 - 26 Related
 - 27 Map region
 - 28 Mountain group
 - 30 Seminar group
 - 31 Tourney pass
 - 32 Mocks
- DOWN**
- 1 Cried
 - 2 Lot unit
 - 3 Oxford application
 - 4 Little jump
 - 5 Make fresh
 - 6 Matches
 - 7 Brusque
 - 8 Frank McCourt book
 - 9 Counting start
 - 10 Valentine color
 - 16 Team backer
 - 18 Put up
 - 19 Still output
 - 20 Poet Sexton
 - 21 Lively folk dance
 - 22 Diet no-no, for some
 - 23 Sanction
 - 25 Russian ruler
 - 29 Throws out
 - 30 Sulky state
 - 33 Be real
 - 34 Bike part
 - 36 Hand cost
 - 37 Bender
 - 38 Fellow
 - 39 Yale student
 - 40 Last mo.
 - 41 Lively spirit



SUNDAY'S ANSWERS



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গাজীপুর।

Memo no: 12.21.0000.021.01.631.22.7489 Date: 18 May 2023

e-GP: Tender Notice No.34(2022-2023)

e-Tender is invited in the e-GP system Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following goods. Details are given below:

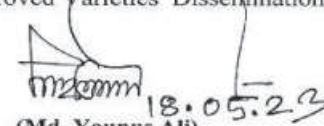
Sl No	Package no.	Tender ID & Ref No	Description of goods	Tender Documents Last selling (Date & Time)	Tender Closing date & Time	Tender Opening date & Time
1.	PN: GD-02	834814 & IRN: 631	Laboratory Equipment 05 (Five) Items.	04.06.2023 16:00	05.06.2023 12:00	05.06.2023 12:00

The interested persons/firm may visit the website www.eprocure.gov.bd to get the details of the tender.

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, Registration in the National e-GP system portal is required.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and e-GP Help Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Project Name : Strengthening of Food and Nutrition Security Program Through Gene Pool Enrichment, Research Technology Development and Improved Varieties Dissemination of Aroids.


(Md. Younus Ali)
 (BARI0663)
 Deputy Director (In-Charge)
 On behalf of Director General

GD-908