

Sanitation: Key to Health

At a time when the UNICEF is about to withdraw itself from funding one of its highly appreciated programmes in this country relating to the production of rings and slabs for water-sealed latrines, the government is stepping in to make sure that the good work continues.

It is good to know that the Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperative Ministry has shown remarkable promptness to save a vitally important programme for the village people.

Providing subsidy as a concept is not welcome according to the proponents of free-market economy. But there are areas like education and health, where the theory does not always work.

That certainly could make our rural health an easy prey to all sorts of hazards. The hundreds of tons of excreta left in the open are already posing serious health problems to the entire country.

No More Nuclear Testing

Come what may, France is determined to conduct a series of underground nuclear tests in the South Pacific between September, 1995 and May, 1996.

The fact that France would ultimately be a signatory to the test ban treaty does not absolve her of the responsibility for ending a three-year testing moratorium she had accepted earlier.

By turning a deaf ear to worldwide protests against his adamancy to go ahead with the tests, French President Jacques Chirac is making no secret of his plans to perfect his nuclear arsenal before giving up the choice for testing altogether after 1996.

Chirac's persistence with his plans for nuclear testing casts a shadow over the benign revolutionary spirit of the Bastille Day on July 14 which France celebrated as her National Day and the rest of the world remembered as something of a prized heritage for mankind.

In the Pacific itself France will be up to its neck in combating an anti-nuclear campaign that is gaining ground almost everyday.

There is still time for France to go by its best instincts which must be telling her to avoid risking any damage to her international image.

Godspeed to STOL Service

After a nervous initiation of the process to get a private airliner break a fresh ground in Bangladesh, we have the good news at long last that STOL service is going to be inaugurated officially from today.

While congratulating Aero Bengal, the private airliner, which has made bold to pioneer the service and the Civil Aviation Ministry which is assisting it to do so, we venture to advise them both that a teething time must still be allowed for the operations to be steady and viable.

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THE Flood Action Plan (FAP) and the Jamuna Bridge are two of the most costly and important infrastructure projects in Bangladesh in recent years.

Flood Action Plan

The Flood Action Plan (FAP) has recently completed its study phase over the last five years at a total cost of around US\$150 million.

Controversy

As the FAP 20 per cent CPP project was really the major physical construction project under FAP (most of the other components being studies) it gave rise to controversy from an early stage.

Jamuna Bridge

The Jamuna Multi Purpose Bridge (JMB) has been a much cherished dream of Bangladesh for many years.

Impact Assessment (EIA) had been carried out by experts organized by BUET who prepared an Environmental Management Action Plan (EMAP) which identified possible negative environmental impacts and recommended suitable mitigation actions.

Committee (EMC) which included representatives from other relevant ministries such as agriculture, fisheries, environment, forest, etc as well as environment experts from BUET, Dhaka University and NGOs.

Closure of the Dhaleswari Northern Intake

One of the requirements of ensuring the viability of the Jamuna Bridge for the future is to ensure that the Jamuna river continues to flow under the bridge.

FAP 20 and Dhaleswari

Now it so happens that the Dhaleswari river is the main source of flood water expected for the FAP 20 (CPP) area and by cutting off the northern intake of the Dhaleswari by JMB the prospects of FAP 20 getting floods is greatly reduced.

In recent weeks the FAP 20 through the Ministry of Water Resources has approached the JMB Authority about the closure and have proposed that an artificial spill channel be constructed downstream of the bridge site to reconnect the Jamuna river with the Dhaleswari which would ensure water for the FAP 20 project area.

Revamping the Foreign Office

Foreign Office personnel have been traditionally misused for counterproductive and demeaning protocol work consisting of 'receiving', 'looking after' and 'seeing off' VIPs and senior officers at the cost of time, money and other substantive work.

THERE are at least three reasons why our Foreign Ministry assumes an added importance in the present context of Bangladesh.

Secondly, training facilities both in and outside the country for foreign service officials have to be increased on a priority basis.

However, the bottom line is that at present the Foreign Office is saddled with all kinds of problems, and hence is severely constrained in performing its rather demanding role.

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sultations, have these approved by the PM and then ensure their strict compliance. In framing the new rules, the practices in other countries should be carefully studied.

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posted to the Foreign Service Training Institute. But they would not if they were later rewarded with a good posting abroad.

Making Government Work

by Analyst

now no one to feed the top echelons of the Foreign Ministry with long and medium-term policy perspectives based on solid in-house research.

piece-rate basis. It is rubbish to suggest that such services are not available in Bangladesh.

Making Government Work

cept those who are already there. Training, grooming and proper placements, coupled with merit-based fairness across the board in matters of postings, transfers and promotions are the only ways to deal with the different categories of officers now serving in the Foreign Office.

Seventhly, on the basis of 'costs' and 'benefits' (financial, economic, political, etc.) in both the short and the long run, the Foreign Office should work out a prioritized plan for future opening and closing of Missions abroad.

Making Government Work

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To the Editor...

Don't destroy the rickshaws

Sir, 'DCC may destroy 7000 seized rickshaws' was the heading of a news published in The Daily Star on 1.07.95.

Although rickshaws are environment-friendly vehicles, the argument in favour of plying more rickshaws on the busy city roads is no more tenable.

The news item also disclosed that such seized rickshaws were auctioned off in the past. Why doesn't the DCC do the same at present?

Perhaps, the authorities of the city know that in some districts (including Tangail and Shariatpur where I observed the phenomenon) vans, that usually carry goods, are used for carrying humans.

Therefore, I request to higher authorities of the city to give the order (for which the DCC is waiting) not to

destroy the rickshaws, but to auction them off to the parties who will sell the rickshaws to district and upazila towns where they are badly required.

Fish hatcheries

Sir, There is an acute scarcity of fish in the country. This has pushed fish prices up beyond any reasonable limit.

Government is providing subsidy to the tune of crores of taka to different sector corporations because trade unions of the corporation are very strong and volatile.

May I, therefore, request the Parliamentary Committee on Ministry of Fisheries to look into the matter and do something in this field which is likely to be very productive and

which will go a long way in providing much needed protein for all and sundry.

Moudud's book — a review of the reviewers

Sir, Moudud Ahmed has stirred up the hornet's nest enough. His latest book 'Democracy and Challenge of Development: A study of politics and military intervention in Bangladesh' has drawn fire from all corners since its launching on June 3.

Some Jatiya Party members are apparently furious and are scheming for an onslaught on Moudud for exposing General Ershad and thus knifing the party at the back.

The ruling party leaders are still quiet, although its Secretary-General Abdus Salam Talukder has said the book is not worth reading.

Enayetullah Khan, who has also

torate is unhappy because he is not in the government. What does this actually imply, only time will say.

But why can't our society have tolerance enough to see his talent as an author and read his book in the spirit it had been written?

Moudud Ahmed has tried rather assiduously to piece together a chronology of events that have dominated the sad history of a country where two presidents, including the country's founding-father, had been assassinated.

But the review of his book on June 3 was disappointing. As one who was in the midst of the audience by chance and had eventually managed to procure a copy of the book, it seemed to me that at least five of the six reviewers did not do their homework and therefore had indulged in useless rhetoric.

Enayetullah Khan, who has also

served in the regimes of the two generals as minister and ambassador, did not seem to have read the book properly.

Professor A K M Mohsin of the history department of Dhaka University was as much critical of the two generals as Moudud. But he criticised Moudud for saying nothing new.

Atiqul Alam, Editor of the Morning Sun, spoke in perfect Queen's English, but he seemed to have read only one chapter of the whole book and therefore did not make a proper review.

Mizanur Rahman Shelly, another former minister under Ershad and one of the country's frontline intellectuals, seemed to be more concerned about defending his own position than making an honest review of the book.

Muntassir Mamun, the young professor of history at the Dhaka University, was the most devastating critic of the book.

the fisheries loss due to the closure of the Dhaleswari northern intake and the spill-channel is being justified to restore the fisheries loss due to the closure of the northern intake.

The final question, however, is who is to foot the bill for establishing the new spill-channel (estimated at US\$ 5 million).

The writer is Executive Director of the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies, a private, non-profit, research and policy institute.

Education, Defence and Information Ministries. The Foreign Ministry, in consultation with relevant Ministries, should take a lead in ensuring that Bangladesh stands to gain from an organized flow of relevant technology from outside.

Ninthly, ambassadors find it increasingly difficult to cope with a chain of command disrupted by dual loyalties of the officers from other ministries in Missions abroad.

Tenthsly, every Embassy should be given a quantifiable yearly target in the various aspects of economic diplomacy.

We have now a distinguished committee headed by an unbiased outsider with unflinching commitment to economic diplomacy looking into the various problems of the Foreign Ministry.

should not have been taken into the military because all of them in a way were 'collaborators'. He said Moudud had no right to talk about democracy because he had served the dictators.

Simply put, Mamun's arguments were frivolous and his comments betrayed the outrage of an angry young man not finding the world going the way he liked.

The issue is judging the contents of the book written by Moudud, and not Moudud himself. Condemn him for his political past and torture him with every refinement of cruelty for helping the dictators perpetrate their rule in this country.

'Bengalee Muslim ICS'

Sir, We have read several letters on the above topic in your paper. One such letter was published on the 28th June written by Mr Tarun Kanti Barua of Chittagong.

M Ali Rajshahi