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Biman landing

I am writing this to draw your attention to the Biman crash news published in DS on 2 July 2005. The news item was full of errors. The report mentioned that the aircraft made a belly landing. A belly landing is done with the landing gears (wheels of the aircraft) in retracted position. But this aircraft landed on its wheels. We clearly saw in TV the tires of the aircraft struck in mud. The aircraft landed on its

wheels but due to some reason one of the wheels broke off. That is not belly landing. The reporter failed to gather accurate data and information from appropriate people. I humbly suggest that you arrange a short training (1 week) for your reporters in the Flying Academy. There they will learn the basic things about aircraft and flying. That will put them in a better position to report future aircraft incidents.

After I had finished writing this letter, I saw a letter by one of your readers published on 8 July 2005. He has mixed up turbo-fan (Turbine driven fan) engine with turbo-prop (Turbine engine propeller) engine. The C-130 aircraft of Bangladesh Air Force have turbo-prop engine. You can see the rotating propellers even from the ground. In DC-10, no propellers are visible because they do not have propellers. A reader, Dhaka

"Islamic terrorism": What is at issue?

A recent editorial of Globe and Mail (Canada) states: "Like Islamism, fascism and communism rose from an unreasoning hatred of the liberal, bourgeois values of the capitalist West". The fascists were actually an integral part of the bourgeois, capitalist West, so it's more likely fascism and communism received immense popular support as a reaction to extreme economic deprivation and injustice. It therefore follows that Islamic terrorism is more likely a result of 150 years of the Western powers pillaging the East for oil and empire.

While it's true all three of the above "isms" have an enthusiasm for violence, the western press catalogue is incomplete. While it mentions that Islamic extremists in Algeria's recent civil war have killed 100,000 civilians, it forgot to mention that the bourgeois, capitalist French

bourgeois West is a shared valued that the terrorists should admire, if the reasoning of the western press is correct.

There is another possibility. For 150 years the West has been plundering and humiliating the East. This accumulated evil has now given birth, with help from the Internet, to a wave of rage bordering on insanity that nobody can control by reasonable dialogue. It's possible that the terrorists don't hate our "freedoms and values", but just hate us, period. Trying to explain to them how wrong their views are and to just stop following that "perverted ideology" may not work in view of the fact that we, the West, wrote the book on violence and the slaughter of civilians. We Westerners may not notice our hypocrisy, but I bet other people do.

David Prior
Halifax, NS

Muslims steeped in

both the worlds here and hereafter, obscurantism sets in. They grunt whenever they are whipped. They become hysterical. They react senselessly, bringing havoc to themselves.

The exponents of the clash of civilisations unleash terror upon them. They cannot negotiate from the position of strength. Only the revival of the true teachings of the Holy Koran can help them find their way.

A reader
Khulsi, Chittagong

Political disintegration

All over the world, there are various signs of political disintegration. Dhaka is no exception, speaking locally. True political leadership has the sensitivity to monitor the advance warnings (through AWS nets), having trained their foresight

the occasion? Not those who are led, but those who presume to lead (point to the right path). It is a lonely world up there; where sycophancy has no footprint. President Bush Jr came at a time when it was the right time of him to be tested. The timing of cosmic forces and events are rather mysterious, and man has little advance control over it—what is life if there were no trials and tribulations? Learn and live; or is it live and learn?

The 9/11 tragedy set a new course in history. The 7/7 London episode is another test for the North. Who did it the second question; the first question is why it was carried out? The possible, probable answers are recorded in history. History is more dynamic than presumed it teaches the hard way.

Now what next? The mechanism for adjustment, in all camps. Easily said than done. What are the common factors in the world brotherhood of man? A rather boring question, but each epic has a beginning

meter, not cylindars

We vehemently oppose Finance Minister M. Saifur Rahman's plan to replace pipeline gas supply by cylinder gas for domestic use. He gave the excuse that housewives do not shut off the burners after use and thus a huge amount of gas is wasted.

We are protesting this remark and wondering from where he got this information. In fact, housewives never keep the burners on to save matchsticks, if they find that domestic helpers have not switched off the burners, they give them instructions not to do it ever again.

The government should provide gas meter, by this the consumers will be greatly benefited because consumption of gas is not same in all the households. But at present those who use less have to pay the same amount as those whose consumption is very high.

We hope the government will consider this matter and take steps to install gas meter. The government should also hunt for the illegal gas connections and take action against those because they squander a huge amount of gas.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong

Intolerant political parties

I am very sceptical about whether our intolerant political parties would be able to reach any consensus to form a more acceptable and unbiased caretaker government.

I think the members of the next caretaker government should be chosen by a neutral civil body comprising neutral and well respected citizens.

Md. Harisur Rahman
Anthropology department, JU

Recycling infection through hospital waste

Food adulteration, pollution, and hygiene of eateries have become the talk of the town, thanks to the print media. We are however conspicuously silent about the far more dangerous pollution being openly caused by the unhygienic disposal of hospital and medical clinic wastes.

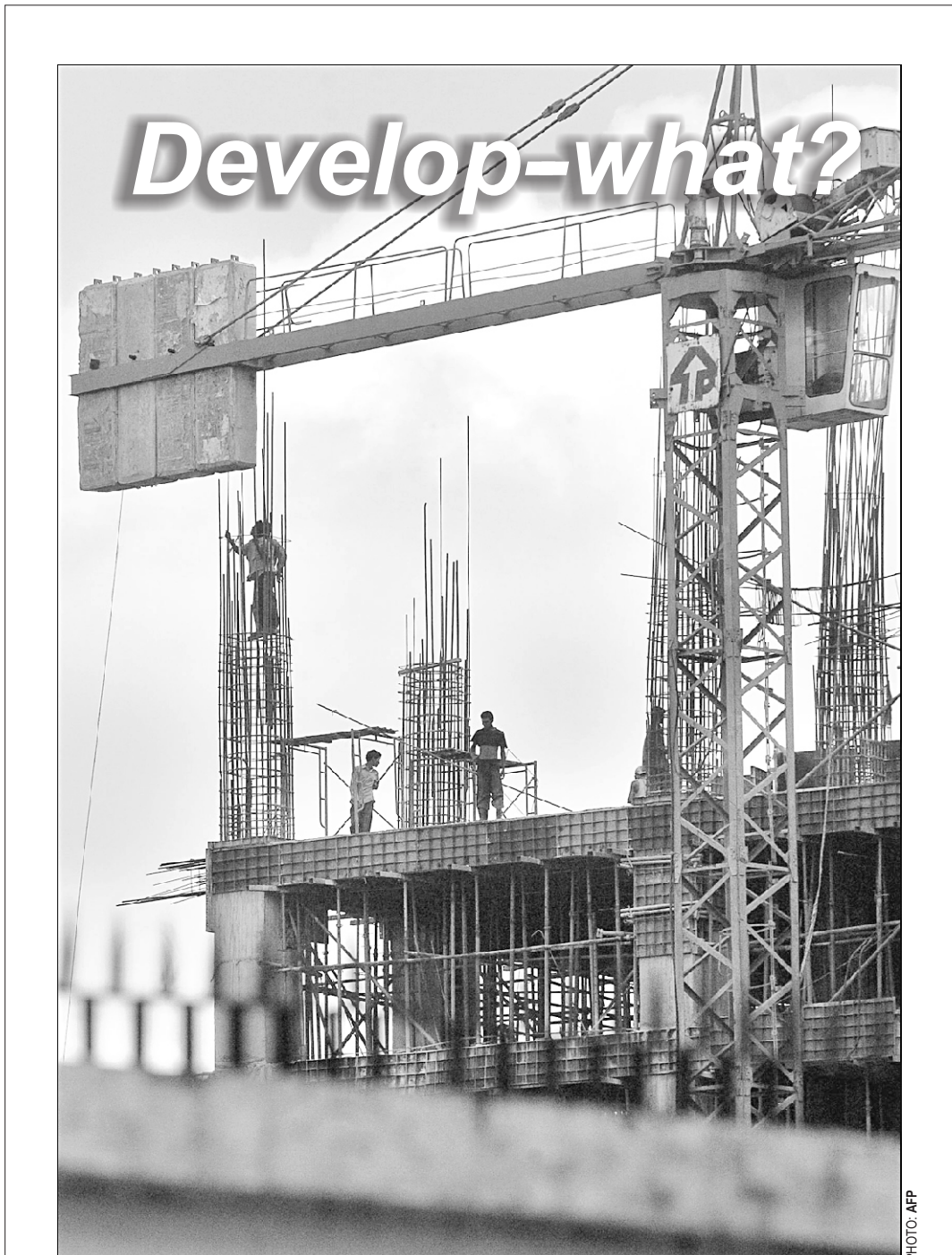
Infected blood, stool, urine and other samples are indiscriminately being dumped in open garbage bins. The same procedure is adopted for soiled blood stained bandages, operation theatre refuse and other dangerously infected similar waste! What is being done about it? It is high time we have inspection teams with the health ministry, City Corporation and public hospital representatives along with a magistrate carrying out surprise inspection to ensure that all hospital waste is hygienically disposed, and spot punish those guilty of indiscriminate and unsafe disposal.

This is not being done, and in fact we are creating innumerable germinating centres for spread of dangerous germs and infections by throwing hospital clinic and pathological laboratory wastes in dustbins and similar places all over the city.

S.A. Mansoor
Gulshan 1, Dhaka

AL-BNP understanding

There is an ingrained distrust between these two parties and it can't be alleviated or eradicated



The government (or rather the political regime) should review the way it is stressing on physical and materialistic development projects. The material development projects are visible, but what about moral development, and the eradication of deep-rooted diseases in the society? These are piling up, and the roots are getting stronger, and the moral environment is polluted, while petty traders are fined for using mini poly bags! This is the irony of life in the under-developed countries. Huge buses are allowed to ply on the metropolis narrow streets, while the popular cycle rickshaws have been banned, depriving the middle classes of the small comforts of life.

The government is not announcing any MRA schemes (moral re-arrangement projects). The result is huge indirect systems losses through corrupt practices. Fingerprinting is not realistic till one's own castle is cleaned up first. Is there no political corruption in the country (regardless of the parties in power)? How many are being prosecuted directly, related to office-bearership? The opposition is noisy, while the regime is quiet in plenty!

Look at the way the students in the universities are being polarised, and are not taught how to think independently and neutrally (on the merit of the case). Note the three streams of education systems in

the society (the other two are the English-medium, and the madrassah education). Why three different roots? How these merge and where and when? Brain drain is being indirectly encouraged twice going out, but not coming back! We are supplying fine raw materials to the foreign imperialists and boast about it! The political divide in the society is slow poison for independent growth and sustenance. The party ambitions have become more important than the unified national goals. We are beating about the bush, and do not realise it. Sunderbans looks beautiful from outside, but inside the man-made disturbances have upset the ecosystem.

The Political Ecosystem is not at all recognised, nor its long-term implications. Our national policies are ad hoc and shortsighted the mood of the moment; even after 34 years of non-practice! We have neither patience nor tolerance, and drown ourselves in weekly anniversaries of this and that. We have to live in the future, not in the past.

The parliament is a haunted house, without any enlightened output. Why have elections? The ruling class is entrenched, to exploit the masses, through many generations. Local tribalism is ruling us in the new millennium!
Alif Zabr, Dhaka

MASS MURDERS

Not a candle was lit, not a flower was placed, and not a second was spared for thousands of dead children, women, and men in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine. Freedom is a gift of God as long as this is under American occupation.

Old colonialism is working in modern form with the only objective to steal oil. Set up lackeys to continue the exploitation as long as possible and establish Israel in Arab land. Israelis were thrown out of England, then France and finally Hitler in Germany murdered six millions of them. Finally the Jews were thrown out of Europe and pushed into Palestine.

American and British greed for free oil and Israel's greed for more occupied land resulted in the present situation. The so-called civilised society is a liar who lied to oust Saddam and murder people to maintain their sphere of influence. They defeated the very purpose of the United Nations, the Geneva Convention on Prisoners of War, torturing and abusing the prisoners brutally and in a most uncivilised manner.

America is the most cruel,

brutal, cowardly and inhuman terrorist in the world, according to Nelson Mandela. They were responsible for the deaths of millions of innocent men, women, and children in Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Iran, Cambodia, Palestine and now in

Afghanistan and Iraq. They call themselves civilised.

They killed thousands of children (and still killing them) with a sanction against Iraq for 10 years. In their own society, there is everyday news of murders, sexual abuse, promiscu-

ity, rape, stealing of millions of dollars by company directors, and gay marriages. This is not civilisation. Civilisation is not their monopoly.

Mohammad Shiblee
Mohammadpur, Dhaka



killed close to one million Algerian civilians and placed another two million of them in concentration camps trying, and failing, to hold onto their Algerian colony. Globe and Mail points out that "Afghanistan's Taliban regime lynched its opponents in a public stadium and killed homosexuals by crushing them with rocks". I expect the Taliban would admire bourgeois, capitalist Americans who have lynched at least 5,000 black Americans at public spectacles and continue to murder homosexuals by hanging them on barbed wire fences. The enthusiasm for violence demonstrated by the capitalist,

obscurantism

Ever since the benighted state of the Muslims, they have fallen prey to the rabid fanatical preaching of the Muslim clerics. As a sequel, they have become steeped in a state of obscurantism. The Muslims are becoming increasingly reclusive, a posture against the basic tenets of Islam. The condition has been further exacerbated by the colonisation, both political and economic, of predominantly Muslim Inhabited Lands, including Palestine.

As a reaction, the Muslims withdrew themselves from all mundane and spiritual pursuits. Thus they lose

and judgement on distant goals. What is the message? Truth is unpalatable!

Bush and Blair, Khaleda Zia and Hasina (and others) are not the victims, but they have public responsibilities for which they are accountable to lead in the right way, whether the curve of change is going up or down (it is never a straight line there is no straight line in Nature).

Lesser leaders transfer the blame on others, and seek sympathy on the misfortunes of the times. None is independent of the environment, political, cultural, social, economic, or religious. Who are expected to rise to

(with an epicentre). How to go back to the basics?

There are three models for examination: the base (foundation); the structure; and, the super-structure. Imagine an inverted triangle. Is it stable? What's wrong with global, national, and local politics? There are no watertight compartments.

The above reflections provide a starting point for the journey into the Unknown. Man is unknown; but the neighbour is not. Why come back to the neighbour?

Abad, Dhaka

We want gas

Neglected railways

The political neglect of BR (Bangladesh Railways) is a colossal mistake on the part of the political masters, judging from the statistics published in The Daily Star of April 18.

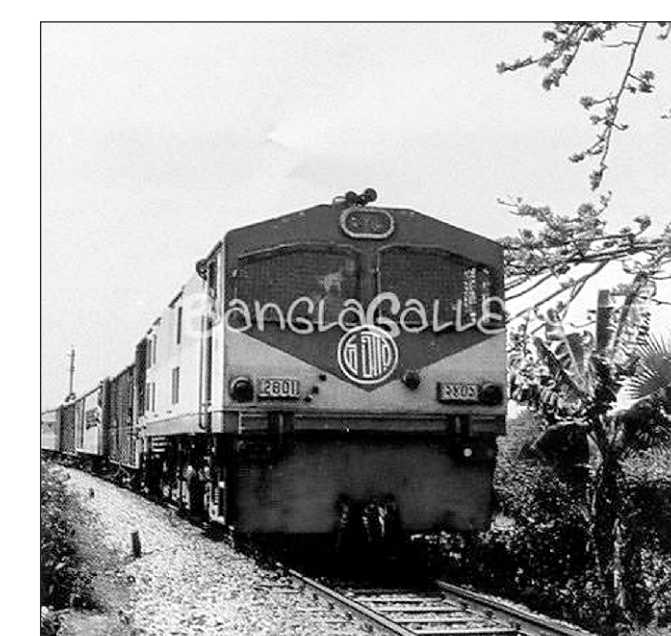
The passengers have halved, while the population has doubled. For proper and attractive operations and maintenance, the budget is short (manpower and equipment, spares and BMRE) to the extent of 50 per cent, year after year.

The political mantra has been "roads, bridges, and culverts." Good, but why neglect the railway network, which are well-established service institutions in any

country. In a low delta region, with 300-500 rivers and large canals, imagine building 10 bridges and culverts on each river (average, based on running miles).

The IWT (inland river transport) has also been neglected (you can reach 90 per cent of the country through water routes), judging by the numerous launch mishaps (informal sector, without institution-based shipyards, training centres and strong regulatory network). Travelling is a torture in Bangladesh!

The weak point: there is no balance in politicians' enthusiasm. In the LDCs, local politics has more respect



than professional long-term approaches in the larger interest of the nation. The reason is simple: too much narrow-minded focus on politics, neglecting other social sides of development. There is a mania for opening ceremonies.

Now we have enough roads culverts and bridges to last for a while; hence attention may be paid to modernise the railway system to serve for the next 50 years.

Due to violence and terrorism patronised by politics, it is unsafe to travel by road (plus poor driving and accident records), and through inland water transport (launch phobia).

BR can quickly handle the fast development projects during the next five to ten years, if the co-operation from the higher authorities is forthcoming. There are imbalances in staff strengths in different departments, which could be corrected quickly. Keep them busy, and the efficiency and dedication will rise automatically.

The road transport private sector can take care of itself now, but the railway is still under public control, and suffering due to wrong policies.

The morale is down due to step-motherly treatment.
Mahsen, Dhaka



Drive against adulteration

Mobile courts are raiding restaurants, bakeries or fruit wholesale markets to find out adulterated foods. This is a good sign for our poor nation.

It is better late than never. But how long will this continue? Is it for the time being only? Or they will do it from time to time?

Jummabi Chakma
West Tejuri Bazar, Dhaka