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Plight of our workers



We are observing the plight of our workers stranded in Malaysian airports. When these people boarded the flight to Malaysia, they dreamt of working hard and sending their hard-earned

money home. Mostly, they envisaged a better life. However, upon descending, they were not received by any members of their recruiting agency. Despite having legal documents, they were



then taken to a warehouse where the authorities stopped supplying food after two days. These people are now staring at their bleak future. During the past few years, labour export to Malaysia has proliferated. Under any circumstances, there must not be any retardation in that trend. Care from our part is necessary to ensure that nobody sneaks off to work illegally. So before sending workers through recruiting agencies, their authenticity must be

checked thoroughly by the visa authorities. Moreover, upon discovering illegal immigrants, they must be brought swiftly back, as these incidents shall dent our bilateral relationships. Again, why should workers be the prey of such imposters? Due to unemployment at home, they wanted to go abroad to become wage earners. Because of furious competition at the government's manpower export department and the strenuous procedures, they go for

other desperate options. Lured by false promises of good jobs, some of them have given all their savings to the agencies and intermediaries. Now, they will encounter a burden upon their whole life. To rescue and support them is an urgent task indeed. We are waiting for a prudent decision by the government. **Ananya Das**
A Level student
Cephalon International,
Dhaka

if the quantity of nicotine contained in two cigarette sticks is injected into a healthy man, it will cause death. It also harms the nerves. According to the specialists, one burning cigarette gives off more than four thousand harmful elements. Cigarette not only harms the smokers but also pollutes the environment. Nonsmokers inhale the poisonous smoke. One should not smoke before children because the poisonous smoke harms the children a great deal. He who drinks poison suffers himself but smoking is dangerous both for the active smokers and the passive ones. It can be said that smoking is committing suicide. A famous scientist said, "Man would have been alive in sound health for thousands of years if he would not inhale dust, smoke and gas". It is high time we gave up smoking without any further delay because it does not give us anything except irreparable loss. Particularly, all he sportsmen should avoid smoking because it reduces stamina. In spite of having merits, they can't succeed in life. As a result, the rosy prospects of the sportsmen are nipped in the bud. Let us unite for building a smoking free world. **Md. Murshed Kabir**
New Paltan Lane
Azimpur, Dhaka

Our police
It is exciting news that our police can prove that they are not an incapable lot. The police are capable of performing much better. Recently, they arrested seven young criminals who had killed an innocent boy for five thousand taka and a mobile set. We do appreciate the success of our police. It is needless to say that our police are working with lots of limitations. **Polok, London**

Bridge on the river Panj
On August 26 Afghan and Tajik leaders, mediated by the USA, have inaugurated a new bridge linking their countries across River

Panj at Pyandzh. The \$37m project, a US gift, replaces an intermittent ferry service across the fast-flowing river. The bridge - nearly 700m (yards) long and 11m across - has replaced an unreliable ferry which was the only way of getting across the River Panj. The bridge on the Tajik-Afghan border river Pyandzh is of strategic importance and will serve the interests of Afghan and Tajik peoples, said Tajik President Eмомali Rakhmon, speaking at the opening ceremony of the bridge between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. The president called this event a historically important moment. "This bridge of friendship is an historic event," he said at the ceremony, the bridge would become "an important link in the development of trade between the two countries. Afghan President Hamid Karzai also made a speech at the opening ceremony. He called the bridge a great bridge of friendship. Karzai said he hoped it would improve economic and trade co-operation "between the countries and the region". "The opening of this bridge provides a chance for boosting trade not only with Central Asian countries, but also with China, Russia and the Gulf countries," he said. Rakhmon emphasised that in the 21st century, construction of highways and bridges is of great importance for the development of trade and economic cooperation with the countries in the region. The opening of this bridge provided a chance for boosting trade not only with Central Asian countries, but also with China, Russia and the Gulf countries. Rakhmon expressed confidence at the same time that the bridge should not be a place for smuggling weapons and drugs. The construction of the bridge started two years ago with US financial aid. Its throughput capacity is 1,000 trucks a day. US Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez joined the Afghan and Tajik presidents at the opening ceremony. Interestingly, the bridge, according to the Americans, is the missing link of the ancient Silk

Road. It could turn Afghanistan into a major transit point for goods and link the whole of central Asia to Pakistan's port of Karachi. Many here fear that drugs and instability will be Afghanistan's most likely export, she says. The heroin that makes its way to Europe comes mostly through Tajikistan. The opening of the bridge, critics say, could increase the drug trafficking further. Acknowledging this, the Tajik leader said: "Everything must be done to ensure that it is not used by drug traffickers or people smugglers." And the US secretary of commerce dismissed the fears. "America," Gutierrez told the BBC, "cannot stop developing trade just because it's concerned about the drugs." But the money is nothing compared to the political investment made by the US. For Washington this is a showcase project, a proof that things can go right for Afghanistan and its neighbours, she says. The bridge does offer a link to the outside world that Afghanistan has long needed. But with the security situation deteriorating and with drug trafficking on the rise, the question is whether bringing Afghanistan closer to the world will help to solve its problems, or will it, in fact, allow them to spread. Russia, closely watching the US involvement in Afghanistan-Tajik border development is conspicuous by its silence over the development. Tajik is one of a few former Soviet states having close links with the Kremlin. Moscow considers the Central Asia as its backyard wherein its legitimate vital interests lie. A bridge of strategic importance to the region cannot be a simple matter for Moscow that it could just ignore, unless there is tacit understanding between the USA and Russia in the matter. **Dr. Abdul Ruff Colachal**
Delhi, India

A fresh beginning
I left Bangladesh with a scholarship in 1974. August 15, 1975 broke our hearts as we lost Bangabandhu. Later, flood, cyclone, hunger, internal disorder, killing of the great freedom fighters like, Taher, Zia, Monzur etc. saddened us all. Then came the years of corruption. We felt very humiliated to have our origin in Bangladesh. Not once, I faced the question, why should Sweden have research and teachers exchange programme with the most corrupt country in the world? Why business in Bangladesh, asked many. The year 2007 has made us all feel proud of our country of origin. I am proud of all my friends and brothers in the armed forces, and the able and wise members of the

CTG for saving the country from an imminent civil war. The CTG has unveiled the politicians' unlimited greed for money and hatred towards the rivals. The two leaders, the two families and two parties did not own the country, even though, they had strong institutions. It is certain that the country does not need such political leaders, who hate their opposition parties, do not tolerate leaders of different opinions, and serve self-interests only. I feel proud of this government for the great work they have done to prepare a roadmap that will allow the honest and efficient politicians to run the country. We hope, our future prime minister will represent the whole country, and thus tolerate all, including the opposition leaders and opposition parties. We hope, our future lead-

ers will debate in the parliament, and unlike Hasina and Khaleda, later go and have lunch and fun together, like the politicians normally do here in Sweden and elsewhere and work for the same goal - a better future for all. We are longing for such a political climate in Bangladesh. **Dr. Mannan Mridha**
Stockholm - Sweden

Justice
Our politicians think that we are, well, to put it bluntly, stupid. Just before her remand, Begum Khaleda Zia said that neither she nor her 'sons have any craving for money' because they have 'been bestowed with the love of the people'. Well I say, if it looks like sleaze, if it smells like sleaze, then in all

probability, it is sleaze! I hope that justice will be served and served with vengeance. I pray that we, as a nation, do not forget and forgive as we did so foolishly in the past. **Fyyaz Shahnoor**
Canberra
Australia

University teachers
A university, we all know, is the highest seat of learning and a sanctuary for resolving problems. University teachers' job is to teach students and to help solve crisis with patience and make the country a safer place to live in. However, it is fairly appalling to observe the role of a handful of university teachers in making the country an inferno. **Nasreen Uttara**

two airports?
After the commissioning of Zia International Airport by the late President Ziaur Rahman, news surfaced in those days that the old Tejgaon Airport would be demolished and the vast area would be utilised for the purpose of residential and government office buildings. Tejgaon Airport, which was an emergency landing strip during the Second World War, was converted into a fully-fledged airport by the govt. of Pakistan in those days. Due to its very location within the city and being also unsuitable for use as an international airport, the govt. of Pakistan started construction of the new airport at Kurmilitola with a view to demolishing the Tejgaon Airport. Now the vital question is, considering the limited landmass available in the country as a whole and that of Dhaka city in particular, can we really afford to have the luxury of retaining the old Tejgaon Airport? Is this at all necessary? We are losing our lands every year due to devouring of the same by the mighty rivers. On top of that, the sea level is rising to engulf further landmass. Our country is so small and getting smaller day by day as the large population is further increasing! Land is so scarce! There are not enough playgrounds for our children and even not enough cultivable lands to feed the hungry millions. Should we not think of our future generations? Should we not protect our each and every inch of land for productive purpose? The irony of this country is that individuals/groups in power only think in terms of their own comforts and better life and do not bother about the teeming masses. I think we have a moral duty towards our future generations and we should leave behind a better world for them to live in. Hence, Tejgaon Airport should be converted into residential cum office areas, while retaining the National Parade Ground. The large waterbodies can also be utilised for pisciculture to supplement our fish shortage. May I hope our city fathers will think of the poor nation as a whole and make a good decision. **M.A. Elihan Zakaria**
Middlesex, UK

Presidency
The post of President in our Prime minister's (I don't say parliamentary or cabinet) form of government is nothing better than a dignified hibernation. One deposed President once lamented that orders passed in his name were hardly shown to him. Can't we plan some reform in this area? **Acitizen**
One e-mail

Stranded Pakistanis
The proposed citizenship for the stranded Pakistani refugees is a completely wrong decision by the government. The decision makers either have no understanding of history, or this decision is a part of the systemic effort to delink people (especially the younger generation) from the glorious freedom movement's heritage and history. No doubt an 'Eid news' for Pakistan. Thousands of freedom fighters are still alive and this news will make their hearts bleed. We hope that the top authorities will dismiss this citizenship proposal. **M Emad**
Oxford, UK

The two leaders
It appears that Khaleda Zia does not have the intellectual capacity to understand why she is in jail. Autocratic practices and "paribartantra" or "dynastic politics" within our dysfunctional democracy have pushed the nation to where we are today. By unilaterally expelling Mannan Bhuiyan, she has demonstrated her immaturity and total disdain for democracy within her party. I find her "Let them eat cake" mentality comically amusing - God save the Queen! (because no one else will). On the other hand, Sheikh Hasina has demonstrated her political maturity and intelligence by appointing an acting president of the party and allowing the council to take all decisions. **Omar Chowdhury**
Uttara, Dhaka
Can we afford

Shoaib Akhtar



The cricketer who always gets himself into trouble is no one but Shoaib Akhtar. The "Rawalpindi Express", who has a habit of getting himself involved in controversies, recently invited fresh trouble for him by hitting Asif with a bat. This puerile behaviour, has now left him out of the Twenty20 World Cup as the PCB has dropped him from the tournament. It appears that Shoaib is destined to miss all the major tournaments because, if my memory serves me right, he, along with Asif, even missed this year's World Cup

although the ban imposed on them had been lifted. More recently, he was also on a six-week probation. So, these sorts of incidents are nothing unusual for the world's fastest bowler. But even though he is now asking for forgiveness, and has expressed his desire to perform for Pakistan in the near future, the question is why should he endanger his career by losing temper so easily in the first place? He must realise that he is now the senior most bowler of his team and therefore the young bowlers are supposed to get inspiration from him.

But as a role model, the examples he has been setting in the recent past are simply unacceptable. Shoaib believes that he is immune! Or 'untouchable!' He must realise that he has a big role to play for Pakistan cricket. He cannot allow himself to get involved in such unwanted incidents. He should learn to respect his teammates and if he does get into a row with a player, he should take the matter to the board or the concerned authorities, instead of beating up the players! **Wasif Wahed**
Old DOHS, Dhaka

DROCKSTARS



It seems rock & roll has scaled great heights in Dhaka city in recent years. Popular "modern" bands like Artcell, Black, Cryptic Fate, Arbovirus, Nemesis etc have made their mark in the music industry. But most recently, the final six bands of DRockStars --Bortoman, Dour, Radioactive, Eclipse, Power Surge, Dreek have also gained considerable popularity in the music indus-

try. Four months of intense competition, heartbreak and simply mind-blowing performances have finally paid off but now the competition has ended. Bands like Power Surge, the ultimate winner, who have delivered splendid performances (portraying their metal core and thrash metal influence), Radioactive, who are most popular amongst the judges as they concentrate on their

old school rock & roll and hard rock ballad's influence, and the other bands-- Dreek, Dour and Bortoman also gained considerable respect. But now after all said and done, this competition has brought about a revolution in the music scene. We expect to see more intense DRockStar competitions in the years to come. **Efaz Ahmed**
Gulshan, Dhaka

Restriction on motorbike import

After being born and brought up in the Middle East, I decided to move back to Bangladesh and live here. What I didn't realise is that import regulations and weird laws are prevailing in our country. I have been trying to import a motorcycle which is a hobby and passion of mine but all efforts have gone in vain. Trying to find answers, I have found that the government has imposed this very "weird" regulation against motorcycles because police & Rab officials have said and I quote, "If high powered motorcycles are allowed, we will not be able to chase them and catch them." This is just a laughable and ridiculous excuse. And therefore it was decided through a government SRO that the import of any motorcycles above 125cc would be restricted. I would like to bring to the government's notice that neighbouring India does not have this law. Don't you think it is an absurd excuse given here? The general opinion of people in Bangladesh is that motorcycles are driven by

hooligans and mastans. What about the rest of us, who are motorcycle enthusiasts and we ride like a hobby. As a result of such laws, there is no development of any recreation or motor-sports activities in our country. We should look at countries like India & Malaysia who are hosts to world class events such as the moto-gp and other motor sporting events which bring huge amounts of earnings for their respective governments. If the import of a Hummer or a Porsche Carrera can be allowed, then why can't I import a 600cc Honda CBR? Our police and Rab officials have not raised any question about not being able to chase a 275 BHP Land Cruiser with their Chinese 125cc motorcycles? A 600cc bike costs approx \$7000. I am quite sure a petty thief would not invest in such a bike to commit crimes. And to ensure that people are buying such bikes, the government can take more proactive measures for the safety of the owners and others. Owners can be requested to

provide passport or voter ID to BRTA during registration and BRTA can issue a heavy motorcycle licence. In return, the government can make more money and people who take biking as a hobby can enjoy their weekend cruising around Dhaka city. I would request the government to look into the matter and come to a logical decision for our benefit. **Shibli Banani, Dhaka**

Crime must pay
We know that BD is a place for playing musical chairs. We have seen what happened to Ershad or to some BNP leaders in the post Zia era. They all got out of the prison. Let us keep our fingers crossed. It does not matter who is in charge or who is in prison, the criminals should be locked behind bars, regardless of who they are. **Dr. Khondkar E. Karim, CPA**
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