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Lux Superstar 2007



PHOTO: STAR

It was fascinating to watch the competition sitting thousands of miles away from home, and get an idea of how a positive social transformation is taking place in Bangladesh. Thanks to all the participants, especially the five finalists. The final session of judgment was an IQ test, and well done by all respondents.

However, I have an observation about the question raised by one of the judges and its reply. Perhaps the judge could articulate the story of the giant, two gentlemen and a lady differently so that a direct personal question could be avoided. Similarly, the respondent could also avoid the word "Bikolango". This word represents an unfortunate section of our society. They are not "Bikolango" by their own choice. The remark of the respondent was not meant to hurt any "Bikolango", but if

any one of them was watching the show, she/he might have been hurt and carried a sad feeling about his or her condition. But I definitely appreciate the situation and time frame under which her feeling was expressed. I also appreciate the need for a humorous atmosphere in such a competition.

A precise family background, including educational background of at least the five finalists, could give us more insight into our social transformation. To me this was a missing factor to make a fair judgment of our positive social transformation.

Finally, thanks again to all participants, judges, sponsors, producers of the programme and the moderator.

A reader
On-e-mail

English medium education

Internationalisation is a mandatory way of developing a country. For this, learning English is necessary. Needless to mention, the "English medium schools" are doing a great job in this regard. But these students have to take equity certificate of their O and A level for admission to medical and engineering university or colleges. This is not fair, to say the least.

A reader
One-mail

DU reopening

The VCs of the public universities met the educational adviser. We, the students, kept our fingers crossed that something positive might come out of this meeting. But the DU vice chancellor did not hint at resuming our academic activities very soon. Now, you know how we are trapped.

What happened on August 20 evening at the DU gymnasium area was unfortunate. While reacting to this incident, the students took to the street; the law enforcers treated them harshly.

But the government and the army were sincere enough to resolve the crisis. The CA expressed his regrets and the army camp in the DU area was wound up. But the vandalism still continued! Who did this? The common students were happy when the army was called off from the campus. But perpetrators of vandalism did not spare the opportunity to destabilise the country. The political parties played a role in this respect.

Being a common student, with no political affiliation, I demand immediate reopening of the university and efforts to be made by the authorities to effectively manage the session jams created by the latest incident. The government should also put pressure on the DU authorities in this regard.

K Chowdhury
Student of Dhaka University

Power conservation initiative

An eye-opening and pioneer news report came in a local daily (Sept:05) that Agsua, a village in Pabna, has taken the lead in Bangladesh by introducing the use of energy-saving lamp at the initiative of the local REB. This is momentous news of national significance and a step in the right direction, given our acute shortage of power everywhere. It should be introduced all over Bangladesh. It was reported that the village earlier consumed 27.5KW, using normal filament lamps. By using compact fluorescent lamps (CFL) there will be a saving of over 20KW! Assuming that the average bulb was of 40 watt, it represents that nearly 700 (seven hundred) filament lamps were replaced by CFLs.

The exercise is praiseworthy indeed, and the village and the REB deserve all praise for this initiative in power conservation. Power conservation needs very little capital, backed up by awareness and educating electricity consumers mostly. I estimate that the difference of price between filament lamps and CFLs of comparable illumination could be at least Tk.100. Based on these values, the financial outlay for introducing CFLs amounted to about Tk.70,000 (seventy thousand taka), if not more.

It would be interesting for all of us who use electricity; and maybe a national model of power conservation, if your newspaper could follow it up and report on the matter, giving the background, the people and organisations involved and how this whole changeover was managed; and the reactions from the users.

It can be a very informative, instructive and interesting news-story for your readers; and of great interest for the authorities also who should replicate this endeavour everywhere. It will go a long way in helping us in conservation of power, which will considerably ease our perpetual power shortage.

S.A. Mansoor
Gulshan, Dhaka

British Council

British Council is an eminent organisation which aims to help the students of Bangladesh to get acquainted with the English language. It also provides scholarship for meritorious students who can't afford to study in foreign universities to acquire a better degree. British Council acts as a helping hand to solve these problems and eventually, its contribution in Bangladesh is an eye-striking one. Besides, being a helping aid, it has well-equipped library facilities and every year some courses are organised to give tips about good English spelling, learning and most importantly, free-hand writing. But the astonishing thing is that it has branches in Dhaka, Sylhet and Chittagong but not in Rajshahi. Rajshahi, as a divisional town, is regarded as the city of education.

RUET, Rajshahi University and the outer campuses of different private universities substantiate the claim. As a result, thousands of students are missing these facilities. English medium schools like Paramount, Blue Bell, etc. could have made excellent progress if there was a little back-up from British Council. British Council can also develop those who want to take teaching as a profession so that they can teach the O-level and A-level students. The O-level and A-level exams are usually taken in Teachers' Training College (TTC) but it would have been better if there was a permanent office of British Council. I, as a student of an English-medium school, would request the British Council authorities to consider my point.

Shatabdi Biswas
RPATC Officers Quarter, Rajshahi

Anti-corruption drive

First, I must mention that there is a need to crack down on corruption, and people rightly supported the anti-corruption drive. But what is most important is to establish institutional reform at every level so that nobody is able to indulge in corruption. The most corrupt areas as we know are thana and local government bodies. The present caretaker government's beginning was OK, but now after 8 months what we are witnessing is terrifying as in the name of anti-corruption drive they are actually hitting at the BNP and the Awami League. Sensible people know that arresting Begum Khaleda Zia and Hasina with most of the former lawmakers will not eradicate corruption. Of course, we need reform in the parties and the minds of the politicians.

Excesses are bad for political stability and democracy.

We must remember that the next election will be futile if active politicians are not able to take part in it; it will be like a football field without players.

Mizanur Rahman
One-mail

Tax on saving instruments

A mere trifle on the DU campus that was subsequently made to spread over the entire country is a matter of grave concern for all. It has been confirmed by several reliable sources at the highest level that within hours crores of taka were poured in to fan the fire for political gains. This is the type of money, the NBR and ACC need to track down and take appropriate action. Instead, what we see is that the middle and lower class people are under the continuous threats of the NBR.

The imposition of taxes on saving instruments is one of the several examples. The over zealous NBR has clearly strayed off its priorities and is frightening the small savers, pensioners and small businesses. There is no argument about payment of taxes but this must be done through motivation and awareness over a reasonable period of time. The mess created over decades cannot be corrected in a couple of month's time.

Money saved for old age comfort, children's education or marriage is not to be compared with the money accumulated through corrupt practices, extortion or looting of the nation's wealth.

Rafiq
One-mail

BNP's demand

The latest demand by the BNP is outrageous and ridiculous, and certainly, reveals the hero-worshipping and leader-centric culture that is endemic in the party. The BNP's new secretary general has made it clear in a press conference that the party will not sit with the EC, until and unless their leader Begum Zia is released, a leader who is charged with some serious crimes affecting national revenue. The very fact that a political sycophant could come up with such a bizarre, preposterous and outlandish demand, does suggest yet again how sick and corrupt our political parties are. The word "shame" is alien to them! After so much talk for so many months (about minus-2, familoocracy, reform etc.), we are still observing the same old leader-centrism, which was the very reason the country fell to pieces.

It seems the BNP sycophants have forgotten the fundamental premise on which a party exists to uphold people's aspirations to uphold national good above all else and certainly not on the premise such as "give us back our leader and we will talk" like some hackneyed western (Hollywood) film where a bunch of bandits are negotiating the release of their equally despicable colleague who is languishing in jail!

I have only one thing to say to the general secretary of the BNP. "Things have changed and you might have done such deals in the past and they worked to your satisfaction but times have changed -

now there's a thing called 'rule of law', perhaps you are not familiar with such societal practice, how can you be? when you are so consumed by your blind devotion to your leader; indeed, this rule of law is here to stay and it will serve the people and so your leader must face the pangs of justice till that time, you and your cronies would be far more useful to the country and indeed your party if you put your mind to some constructive activities, rather than lamenting on a dead issue like your leader."

Dr. S. I. Zaman
University Professor

Build an overbridge

The Mirpur Road, one of the busiest highways in Dhaka, is not only a route of daily communication but also links the two sides of Dhanmondi, mostly the school areas. Due to the location of their residences and lack of transportation, a great number of children and their guardians are forced to walk to their schools and back home. Many of them have to cross the Mirpur Road almost every day to go to their schools and return home.

Regardless of the traffic signals and zebra crossings, reckless driving continues in the Mirpur Road, making road crossing here one of the most dangerous tasks for the school students, teachers and guardians as well. In the middle of this dangerous situation the traffic police men are pretty much helpless spectators.

It is therefore a common sight in Mirpur Road to see school children running across the road to avoid speeding vehicles.

The problem is immensely acute in the junctions of Mirpur Road with Road No. 4, 5, and 6.

To make sure that we do not undergo this task with our lives at stake, the authorities concerned should build an overbridge on the Mirpur Road, somewhere near Road No. 4, 5 or 6. Then regardless of the irresponsibility of the car drivers, crossing the road will be safer for those who need to.

Farah Hamud Khan
Class IX
Sunbeams



Piranha!

It has been reported in the press that the carnivorous piranha fish is being cultivated in ponds and sold in open market in some parts of our country by calling it rupchanda as it looks like rupchanda! Piranha causes serious damage to aquatic life and the environment.

Immediate measures should be taken by the authorities to check piranha cultivation.

Professor M Zahidul Haque
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University
Dhaka

Unemployed

I passed BSC in electrical and electronic engineering 6 months ago from a public engineering university. But still I am unemployed because I have no connections!

So shall I not be able to get a job? Moreover, most of the companies of our country are looking for experienced people. So those who are fresh graduates like me are helpless.

Jony Saha
Ex-student of a public engineering university

Suspension of RU teachers

I am deeply disturbed by the news that the RU authorities have

ordered the suspension of the teachers arrested on suspicion of instigating the violence on campus. The investigation is currently under way and the suspension slapped on the arrested teachers in such haste smacks of very harsh treatment by the current university administration.

Slapping such a humiliating suspension order in such haste when nothing has been proved yet against the arrestees is unbelievable, particularly in a public university of Bangladesh that enjoys the 1973 University Ordinance, guaranteeing freedom from interference and influence by the government.

A former RU teacher
On-e-mail

TOP TWO



Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia have caused irreparable damage to our country. With their arrogant and corrupt practices, they have destroyed our education, culture, social harmony, economy, law and order, religion, environment everything! Nothing escaped the wrath of these two ladies and their corrupt parties. They both had plenty of time to apologise to our people. They didn't. So now it is time for them to pay the hard way.



They have been arrogant and unfair to us, but we don't want to be unfair to them. So we strongly call for both of the ladies to be given fair trials. But we don't want to be unfair to millions of those who have fallen victim to the crimes of the AL and the BNP either. So, the law should take its due course.

Azad Miah
Oldham, UK

An appeal to Chief Adviser

At the international level, Bangladesh is today known as a country of records of human rights violations. As an unfortunate nation, our country has suffered tremendously with lots of political killings and torture of opponents, frequent use of police and other law enforcing agencies in victimising innocent people.

We have observed how a political government created and used special forces to kill opponents without giving any consideration of how this act was evaluated by others, especially who are watchdogs of human rights violations nationally and internationally. The party in power abused their power to kill people as if they were free-birds that could be easily killed! Many national and international watchdogs of human rights including Bangladeshi media repeatedly asked the governments to stop such barbaric acts. But the governments paid no attention to it.

Now, we have a non-political government, led by an educated and enlightened person, who worked in many reputed national and international organisations and who surely understands how important it is to honour the citizen's basic rights of getting fair judgment. Is it not a crime to seize the right of people, even if the person is a listed criminal, of justice and kill them in the name of crossfire? Are we not trying to establish the rule of law? I would urge the Chief Adviser to review the killing by law enforcing agencies initiated by political governments and stop it, as we believe that your government is working to protect the human rights of people. Let's enhance the image of Bangladesh globally, not only by curbing corruption but also by establishing the rule of law and improving human rights records. Let's not forget that nobody is above the law, not even the abuser of the law! Let's give Bangladesh a chance to be honoured internationally.

Abdul Moyeen
Australia

Intel's assistance

It has been reported that the top microprocessor and semiconductor chip manufacturer of the world, the Intel Corporation, will assist Bangladesh with Tk 700 crore in Information Technology education.

Intel will provide 1,000 computers for schools and train teachers over the next three years to help spread Information Technology education in Bangladesh's rural areas. Craig Barrett, Intel chief and Dr. Yunus, the Grameen Solutions chairman, signed the agreement.

However, Intel has no immediate plan to invest in Bangladesh's fledgling Information & Communication Technology sector, Barrett told a news conference. This reveals our poor performance in this sector. Vietnam enjoys Intel's direct investment after Barrett's 2002 visit to the country.

Shouldn't we gather more pace in the race?
Saif Tinku
One-mail

DU flare-up

It is very clear that the Dhaka University teachers, who are said to be highly responsible members of our society, are the key people who added fuel to the fire. The government solved the problem very promptly, but the teachers led the students and sent them to the path of violence.

The only way to prevent repetition of violence is to have university campuses shifted to places outside the city. Then the political importance of the DU teachers will also be reduced and they can engage themselves in teaching. This may not sound very convincing, but we cannot allow a repetition of what we saw on the DU campus.

Shahjahan
USA

The army camp in DU which was set up last December (long before the present CTG and emergency) was bound to provide friction points and sparks.

The student protest was successful in that all their demands were met as expeditiously as possible and they should have calmed down. However, for some reason this success was seen as a weakness of the CTG and was possibly exploited by vested politicians, teachers and student leaders who wanted to take an opportunistic swipe to destabilise the government and the country.

The students had no cause to bring out processions in violation of Emergency Rules after all their demands were met and engage in violence, burning vehicles and doing criminal damage to ordinary people and property. They must remember that it is their own government and similarly the law enforcers must realise that the students are their own children and kin and the future of their country.

It was a wise decision to clamp curfew to calm down the volatility although it has caused much suffering to the innocent public.

It is now hoped that the guilty of both sides will be quickly identified and given due punishment. Like the political philosopher Hobbes we must all learn to appreciate that even a bad government is much better than total anarchy.

Engineer Shafi Ahmed
London, UK

The people along with your daily welcomed the lightning speed steps taken by the present government to defuse tension after the sudden outburst at Dhaka University. This was the first time in the history of this nation that the incumbent

government responded so quickly and positively to a national crisis detrimental to the government's image. It was also a positive sign that the army personnel opted for reconciliation, rather than confrontation with the students. Through these mature decisions, they have upheld the greater interest of the country and have demonstrated their respect for broad public opinion. The decision to remove the army camp from the campus together with the initiation of a judicial inquiry, in addition to the army's investigation, into the worrying incidents should have stopped the destructive activities of the agitating students.

The escalation of violence outside the campus area indicates that some elements are out to destabilise this government. We are very much apprehensive of those elements who are still active and working against the interest of this nation.

For God's sake, we do not want to go back to the days when all norms of governance were systematically destroyed. We do not want to go back to those days when inefficient and unqualified judges were appointed from cadres of their party.

We urge upon the present government to be firm. The people are with you. The people of this country want a democratic government genuinely voted to power by the people. This government has given us assurance.

Shafiqul Islam
One-mail

