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Dhaka Metro



Recent news about the construction of Metro or Monorail system in Dhaka city in an attempt to ease the traffic congestion has brought a sense of hope and relief to the Dhaka's road users and pedestrians. We were tired of the false promises and hopes given by the past governments. Bullet train, Metro, Monorail etc etc were promised by the

communications minister. Everything has turned out to be bluff and cheap election propaganda. We would like to believe that the present caretaker government would keep its promises. Although the government is expected to be in power for a little more than one year, the communication ministry can at least start the foundation work of the

Metro or/and Monorail system so that the future political government will just carry on the rest of the work. We are so unfortunate that we have got little confidence in our political parties. I think the Metro system would suit Dhaka better than the Monorail system because the Monorail would occupy much of Dhaka's free

passage and spaces. There will always be the need for the extension of the transport system in future. The Metro system will suit the plan of future extension. A modern Metro system in our Dhaka city is no longer a dream or impossible task. God willing, we can make it. **Mahmud Hasan**
Stockholm, Sweden

Business in Ivory Coast

Bangladeshi garments sector is in dire straits. The 74% export market depending on RMG is an ominous sign and we must look for diversification of our exportable products base in order to keep our competitiveness in the international market. To add fuel to it are the conspiracy theories and vested interest groups who are constantly trying to take away our market to the other countries vying for the share of the export pie. It's indeed a shame that we are not adding value to our products and not looking into product diversification and we are paying the price by being tied to a single product. A t-shirt can get a manufacturer may be a paltry 3 dollars whereas the same t-shirt is sold at 10-20 dollars even in the discount stores in the US or in the EU countries.

The next alarming news is losing the manpower market in Malaysia. Because of our over greedy recruiting agencies, young aspiring people are falling prey to these unscrupulous agencies and are being trapped into inhuman situation in foreign countries. Why can't we see the bigger picture? Why do we have to run after the quick money by pushing innocent job seekers at bay?

I am working in a West African country named Ivory Coast or Cote d'Ivoire as it is called from the times when it was a French colony. The country is huge and only 2 million people are living in this fertile country. The weather is a pleasant 20-25 degrees all year round. It's much like a permanent 'Shorotkaal' here in

Abidjan, the commercial capital of Cote d'Ivoire. Windy, pleasant and you don't sweat. You don't need a sweater ever and one t-shirt can go on you for a week before it might need a wash! The people are friendly and the public systems are good. The infrastructure is West European standard and the electricity is surplus. The people are welcoming and there's plenty of land to work on. But the daily commodities are costly. I mean costlier than Dhaka. But the things which are costly in Dhaka are less expensive here! Like land, leasehold, house rent, a transport etc. So a Bangladeshi entrepreneur can find a nice niche for him to open his business here in Abidjan. All I want is good things to happen to my dear

country Bangladesh. So if some business entrepreneurs come here and open their import business in Abidjan, I think it's going to be very profitable for both the parties. Local people will enjoy world standard products and the Bangladeshi entrepreneurs will make a good living. I heard about a Japanese trade fair here in Abidjan and I am hopeful that there can be a trade fair of Bangladeshi products here in Abidjan. I am willing to help anyone interested to know more about these and you can mail me at runinan@gmail.com or you can visit the blog at <http://banhqspcoy.blogspot.com/>
Mahboob
Abidjan
Cote d'Ivoire



Save our jute industry

The condition of jute in Bangladesh is deteriorating day by day. Jute mills are being closed down one after another. It is an undesirable situation for the industrialisation of the country. The terrible news is that World Bank and some other international authorities are exerting pressure in the present caretaker government for closing the other govt. owned jute mills. Jute mills are flourishing in our neighboring country India. Then why pressure is being exerted on us to close the jute mills while there are many reasons not to close them? We should at least keep the existing mill running.

Jute mills were nationalised after independence and the condition of jute mills along with other types of mills is deteriorating for mismanagement. Adamjee, the biggest jute mills in the world, closed down for the same reason. However, when the demand of natural fiber is increasing around the globe day by day, jute based industries have a bright future. Closure of jute mills does not mean only its closure, but it creates a

difficult situation for backward and forward linkage industries. It also creates unemployment. Many backward and forward linkage industries based on that long established jute industry are getting ruined.

So the government as well as all concerned should think about it and take the initiative for overcoming the situation. We should keep the mills running at any cost.

A.R. Omar
Kabi Jasimuddin R/A
North Kamalapur
Dhaka

Parliamentary election

This is a good news that the national election for the 9th Parliament could be held in the month of October 2008. A few issues need to be resolved before the next election since the public by and large want to observe a model parliament for which they have sacrificed so much.

Besides the correct voter list, there should be a regulatory framework for the registration of political parties and the possible candidates. The parliament should

not be the house of traders representing different chambers of commerce, nor a gossip chamber of a few illiterate musclemen!

The party who will form the government must get the majority popular vote, not the number of seats alone. Previously, we observed a party winning 41% percent of popular vote but could not form government, but the party which captured majority seats of MPs formed the government, although the popular vote was only 38% in its favour.

Therefore, there should be thought about the Mixed Member Proportional system as being practised in New Zealand, UK, and some other countries. In the Ontario province of Canada, Referendum was held on this issue of Mixed Member Proportional on 10 October.

Therefore, prior to the next election, there should be a precise policy guideline from the government regarding the next parliament, its size, way of formation etc.

Kumar Prithwiraj Nath
Toronto, Canada

1971 genocide resolution

Despite the opposition and warning of President George W. Bush and the Turkish government, a Congressional committee of the US House of Representatives endorsed a resolution calling the early 20th century (during WWI) killing of about 1.5 million civilian Armenians by the Ottoman army a 'genocide'. The resolution will soon be sent to the full House for a possible vote.

Can the Bangladesh Liberation War Museum or human rights organisations or the Bangladesh government initiate the adoption of the 1971 genocide (3 millions) resolution by the UN, EU, US, UK, Canada, Australia etc? Then this can be an important first step on the way to 1971 war crimes trial, war compensation, 1947-1971 assets claim and resolution of the stranded Pakistani refugee issues.

Thousands of Pakistanis and their collaborators of 1971 are still there in Pakistan, Bangladesh and western countries.
M. Emad
Oxford, UK

Star Literature Eid Special

I was very glad to find a special Eid issue of the Star Literature which contains interesting stories all translated from Bangla to English. My heartiest congratulations to your Literary Editor Khademul Islam. As gathered from his note, you had actually given the idea of bringing out this exclusive edition. Congrats to you as well!

I am yet to go through all the stories but it appears that all the entries are good and interesting. I am sure this issue will greatly help in popularising the literary works of our local writers wherein they portray our own culture and living style. This issue will also assist translators learn about the art of translating matters into English.

Meanwhile, I am sorry to know that none of the entries from Sylhet was qualified to get entry in this issue. Anyway, I hope that they will make up the gaps and get their works published in the next special issue of the Star Literature.
Professor M Zahidul Haque
Chairman, Department of Language
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University

Police and colonial past

Police in the subcontinent was not raised for the benefit of the people of this land. Police forces in this land emerged as an anti-people organisation since their inception. Police of the British Bengal used to do the notorious jobs for their colonial masters. Police were being trained in those days in tune with the desire of the colonial administrators. Police very often came down heavy on the poor peasants. They used to arrest and detain innocent indigo cultivators. They robbed the people of their little belongings who lost the ability to pay the land revenue. Even if the poor farmers had no harvest due to flood or draught, they were not spared. Police were the instruments of collecting money for the white Shahib.

Police were the synonym of torture and tyranny in the whole of the British dominion. But these Indian gladiators were not paid properly. In some jurisdictions they were not paid from the government exchequer. A

percentage from the booties was the only salary of the police in the subcontinent.

Police in those days, though were born and brought up in this land, were not for people of this country. They were against the people of this land.

Police of this subcontinent were never pro-people. So the term, 'Restoring the image of Bangladesh Police' is a misnomer. Our police had no good days and no good image. So they did not lose anything good. Since the independence of this country our police gained a lot of good things. Still our police have no positive image. So it is the time that we build our police as an organisation of our own. Looking back to old days, nothing will be gained. Let us look forward and raise our cherished police force. Let us change the 150 years old Police Act (which was enacted by the colonial administrators) and rewrite the PRB. Let us think about the command and control of the police. Above all, let us prepare the people to tolerate an honest and efficient police force.

The truth is, only a civilised nation can desire a civilised police force.
Razzak
One-mail

Detained DU teachers

In connection with the August 20-22 DU incidents, some DU teachers are detained now. I passed from the CU but when I see DU teachers are moving in prison van under police custody I feel bad. We know the allegations against them. We also know the teachers. Especially, Prof. Anwar Hossain and his family's glorious past is known to all conscious citizens.

They are under trial. If the allegations are proved and the court gives its verdict against them, then people will raise no point. Until then, like me, many people believe that the teachers wanted to save and guide their students.
Imtiaz
Uttara, Dhaka

Political parties

Some of the political parties including the 'name only' ones are clamouring ahead of holding dialogue with the EC against the measures reportedly adopted by the EC in the registration process of the political parties. But we the general public strongly believe that some kind of regulatory obligations should be there for the political parties to fulfill and ensure financial transparency

before they can become eligible for registration to participate in the general election. There should be a clear-cut policy guideline on prevention of nomination trading. The EC should be authorised under the provision of the constitution to act as the Regulator with adequate legal power to deal with the offenders. This is absolutely necessary to keep the political parties on the right track. The EC should go ahead with the formulation of the regulatory legal framework after seeking public opinion (if felt necessary) on the proposed provisions and thereafter place the same before the CTG for adoption. It will not be wise to let the politicians have a free hand in the registration process in view of their adverse past records. The political parties and the politicians will ultimately govern the country. Therefore, some mechanism for screening should be there at the initial stage to encourage and induct patriotic, educated and honest persons in the parties. This may not be hundred percent possible but an awareness can be created at all levels to discourage musclemen, criminals, terrorists, extortionists etc. joining the political parties,

who under the umbrella of high-ups in the party consider themselves above the law and use their political platform as a safe haven to continue with their criminal activities as noticed in the past. Effective check, therefore, must be there to prevent entry of these elements into the political parties as far as practicable with an obligation on the parties to expel their 'at the instance of the EC'. In the past we saw persons with those "qualifications" even became ministers! The country's future depends largely on establishment of a patriotic, healthy and honest democratic institution. Today, in general the politicians are looked down by the public as 'Munafiqs', meaning those who are liars, misappropriate public properties, breach trust and do not honour their promises. That is why the country is in a mess today. We have got a unique opportunity now to weed out these elements. The country would plunge into the same turmoil, lawlessness and uncertainty if those people are allowed to enter the political arena once again.
Mohammad Ataul Hoque
One-mail

Inzamam quits

Inzamam-ul-Haq, who earlier quit as Pakistan Test captain and retired from one-day internationals on March 08, has now announced his retirement from Test cricket as well, rounding off an extraordinary weekend for his country's national cricket team. Inzamam still remains one of Pakistan's most potent forces with the bat, boasting a formidable Test record.

After the second Test against South Africa in Lahore starting from Oct 07 the former Pakistan captain Inzamam-ul-Haq, a 37-year-old batsman, retired from Test cricket. Earlier after the

poor performance in the World Cup in March, he had announced his retirement from international one-dayers. Inzamam's tally in 378 limited overs matches stands at 11,739, which remains a Pakistani record. Since making his Test debut against England in 1992, Inzamam has played 119 Tests and scored a Pakistani record of 25 Test centuries, amassed 8,813 runs and has a batting average of 50.07 in his 378 one-day internationals. Inzamam is also the proud holder of a record that shows that out of 25 Test hundreds, 17 came in matches won by

his country.

The 37-year-old will be remembered as one of Pakistan's finest one-day batsmen. He was part of the team in 1992 which secured the trophy in Australia, beating England. Over all, though, his memories of the World Cup will be wretched. In the last competition in South Africa, he mustered just 19 runs in six innings and said his performance was one of the major embarrassments of his career.

His batting skills flourished after he was made the regular captain of a troubled team in November 2003 and it is no surprise that throughout his spell as skipper his averages improved in both Test and one-day cricket. Inzamam also became one of the most controversial figures in Pakistan cricket and abroad. His statement that every player needs to be given the chance to bat goes against the batting brilliance of a few powerful batsmen.

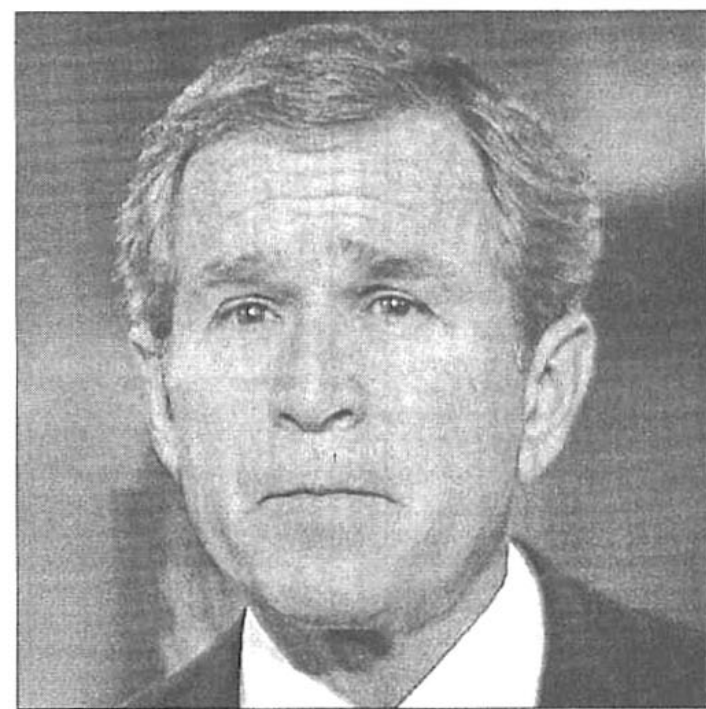
Inzamam will remain both as an inspiration and a warning to the batsmen. He took batting for granted as many others also do after getting due recognition.

Best wishes to him for a further creative future. Bye, Inzamam!

Dr. Abdul Ruff Colachal
Delhi, Dhaka



Role of USA



When someone jumps into a decision without knowing the consequences, then that person or, for that matter, that nation can be likened to a fool. The stance that the US has taken to police the world is failing miserably on their faces and they are getting slapped left and right in Iraq and Afghanistan; however, their moronic attitude is really stopping them from realising that they are into slow poisoning the world and most importantly, themselves.

Yes, both Afghanistan and Iraq had problems within

their countries, but after the US invasion both countries have become terror zones. Whatever view one may subscribe to, the fact is, the USA is clearly disturbing world peace and, being the 1,000 pound gorilla that it is, none can challenge it and can only raise meek resentments.

I am sure conscientious people live in the USA and they should now take the task to the White House and tell their President, "Enough is enough, we want peace." There were no WMD in Iraq and someone should take the blame for it. Should it not be

the USA, Bush and his team of war mongering cabinet secretaries who should be responsible for these senseless killings? People are losing lives and limbs, many soldiers are losing sanity and many children and decent citizens are maimed or snuffed out of life for the love of war, unjustified war, that Bush is raging across the globe and now planning to export to Iran, which has repeatedly said that their uranium enrichment is for peaceful purpose only.

The bitter irony lies in the fact that the USA is trying to enforce nuclear non-proliferation when indeed it has WMD that can blaze away the earth 30 to 40 times over. Now, where is the sanity of thought and global conscience? The USA has become the tiger that has tasted blood and without rhyme or reason, it is exporting vengeance and creating counter vengeance. Both are wrong and deadly, but the instigator (USA) is wearing the mask of justice and democracy while eating away at the vitals of human harmony, democracy and peace. The truth could not be further now from the United States of America, which has been coining new schemes to enter into Iran and trying to get international support. France, with its new boss, is

also singing similar songs, not knowing the monumental catastrophe that it is helping to brew. The imbecilic decision of the USA can bring in global chaos and countries like Bangladesh will get seriously burnt if such baneful actions of unlawfully trying to contain Iran are initiated.

Let us not allow the USA to spread its cock-and-bull stories again in the world arena. Let us muster enough courage to put sanctions against this raving mad country called the United States of America that once used to be the epitome of democracy.

With increased globalisation, leadership in the USA should also be globalised, meaning people from poorer countries should at least have 15-20% vote on who gets to become the President or an important person of the United States. If the USA keeps on disturbing world harmony or killing innocent people on the pretext of containing terrorism, then the world has the moral right to protect themselves by ensuring that a sane leader with moral conscience is at the helm of affairs in the USA!

Ziaur Rahman
CEO, ITM
Dhaka