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Mega Transport Project

Finally after 37 years of independence, 15 years of democracy, the caretaker government launched a long-term mega project to establish an environment-friendly traffic management system in greater Dhaka to relieve people of the nagging traffic congestion. Though it will be a 20-year plan, still it is a well-come move by the government and we all hope that the project



PHOTO BY REZA DRINKNEWS

has been planned taking into consideration the future growth (after 50 years) of the city.

Going through the details of the project in the newspapers, I have a little doubt about the implementation of the of water-way as it is slow and often doesn't have enough water for smooth navigation of medium to big size vessels or steamers, especially during the dry season. Metro train services (MTR), elevated motorways, construction of roads connecting the east & west of the capital, flyovers, footbridges and new roads, and repair of damaged thoroughfares are the main features of the plan. Though the pavements and parking lots are not mentioned in detail, we just hope the government has considered a safe walkway system and specious parking lots in the Mega plan.

Without wasting further time, the government departments should move forward immediately if the long-term plan is to succeed in a meaningful way by stopping all constructions on the planned roads so that after the 2nd or 3rd phase, the government doesn't have to stop the work for court injunctions as we understand that many privately owned lands will be acquired by the government for implementing this project.

Since this is the only major project taken by any government of Bangladesh, it is requested that they, if necessary, invite foreign city planners (Far East Asians) and experts, so that the maximum can be achieved with minimum expenses and sufferings of the people during the construction work. The construction work certainly will be the biggest/largest in the history of Bangladesh and it needs proper guidance and care.

Construction of 12 roads to have major advancement in the city's infrastructure and completion of three elevated motorways will be done in the second phase. However, we would like the roads to be wide (not less than 170 feet), so that the roads can have 4x4 traffic lanes and a 20 feet wide road divider (so that in the future flyovers can be made without too much of a problem) and footpaths of 20 feet width on both sides should be constructed.

Since this is the caretaker government approved project, we all hope that whoever comes to power next and in the remaining 15 years will not stop implementation of the project.

Sohel Ahmed, Dhanmondi, Dhaka

my first trip to England as an American. Brighton has its famous royal pavilion, modelled on the Mughal architectures of east. Because Brighton always was a place to go to see something out of the ordinary, a place where anything seemed exotic compared to the six day week factories. Where for a spell each year the English could be something other than English. And so it was on the beach there last Tuesday. A group of boys were sitting in the waves up to their necks, clothed in shorts and t-shirts, shrieking every time a larger wave crashed over them. At a demure distance, but still subject to near total immersion from the largest waves was a group of girls in brightly coloured sarwar-kameez. Up the beach was grandma in black niqab, video camera pressed against the slit, capturing the scene and shouting directions. All Muslim by dress, Bengali by volume and mirth, and so completely, so absurdly British. Then the heavens opened in high borsha passion and everyone on the beach, whether in the waves or not, was instantly drenched. And in the rain I could hear "nache nache rumo tale"

Nigel Hughes
Dept. of Earth Sciences
University of California

Reports on Tarique

Some newspapers carried out a front-page report on Tarique Rahman's injury along with his wife's tearful picture. I was in a coffee shop yesterday, when I came across a group of people expressing their sadness witnessing the 'million dollar' picture. What amazed me most is that nobody cared for the person who died because of the vandalism that took place near Dhaka University. The poor man's death was another priceless life the common people give to 'jalapora' politics. Today, we chant slogans for democracy and perhaps that is why we have the right to burn anything and to kill anybody. Today, the tears of Dr. Zobaidda Rahman are much more valuable than the pain and agony the family of Jahangir Alam is going through. What was his fault? He was walking on the roads of a democratic country!

The media carried very few reports on the killing of Jahangir Alam, a small businessman. I feel ashamed to call myself a citizen of a democratic country, where one has no right to live because somebody else has a right to protest.

Law, news coverage and perhaps emotions are all private preserves of the powerful.

That is why so much fuss about it. We never thought about the three little kids the innocent businessman left behind. Why? Because we all are busy thinking about our leader. What a society!

Arafat Islam
Dallas, USA

Pakistan scene

After the fall of General Musharraf, our politicians always refer to the CTG to observe the fate of the non-democratic government, so that our CTG can take this into account and quit as soon as possible. But what happened after Musharraf's resignation?

Obviously, the crisis will be more acute when Zardari takes over as the next president.

Bilkis Rahman
Govt. HSS College
Magura

Lamb in tiger's skin?

At last the whole nation has been disillusioned about the much-trumpeted charisma of the CTG. Even long before the expiry of its term, it has got its paws & talons

blunted and teeth broken. Ah! How high was the expectation of the nation! But they have failed us. They are to be cursed more than those who have hitherto been sucking the blood of this wretched nation. What shall we say? A bunch of so-called highly educated people/bureaucrats! They did finally land us in this ditch where the thugs and goons and their godfathers had been wallowing! Shall we ever be able to put trust in so-called highly educated people/bureaucrats? What difference did they make from those inebriating with power & position & purse? What made them so kneeling in compromise with the branded corrupt and plunderer politicians? M.S.All
Singapore

Sexual harassment in educational institutions

Sexual harassment of female students by their teachers in our educational institutions all over the country is common, which shocks us very much and tarnishes the image of the particular institutions as well as the teaching profession. The teachers who are involved in sexual harassment lack morality and principles. They have stigmatised the noble teaching profession. I cannot imagine how a teacher can sexually harass female students.

Md Zillur Rahman
Dhaka

Sexual abuse both by male students and teachers in different universities of Bangladesh has become a matter of concern. From my experience as a student of one of the public universities, I can say that this has been going on for quite a long time. What I am disturbed by is that I know many teachers of many departments of my university who tried to develop relationships with young innocent students who held extremely inflated impressions about these teachers. Exploiting their feelings, these teachers can readily weigh up some of the girls' vulnerability. This is seduction in the true sense of the term and the question is: isn't it sexual abuse too? While most young girls involved in such relations nurture their romanticism and dream, the teachers just have fun with them and forget everything. Later, the girls suffer from both frustration and trauma. I am writing this because I am a witness to such incidents and I just want to share it with the readers.

Adnan Karim
One-mail

Cricketers' poor show

We are very passionate about our cricketers. They sometimes made us really proud. The last World Cup was a dream tournament for us.

But were those results flukes only? We do not believe it. But they are not showing any improvement. They have to make more determined efforts to do well at that level of the game.

S.M. Shamin-Ur-Rashid Tushar
Department of Business Administration
Shahjalal University, Sylhet

Develop more housing projects

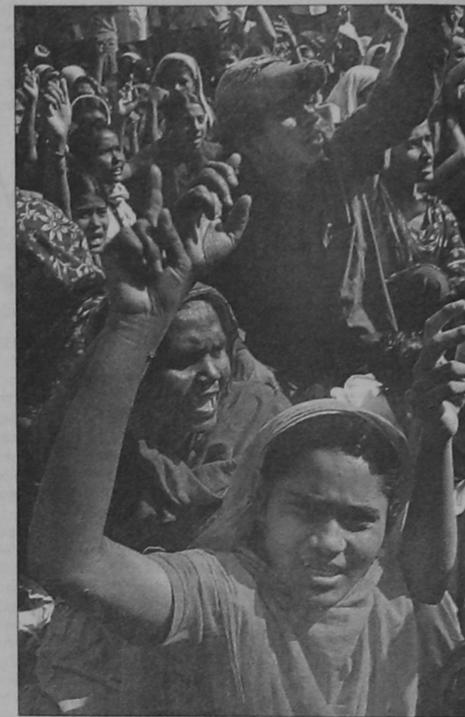
I live in Australia and during my last visit to Bangladesh I tried to buy a new plot in a suitable location that has full project permission from Rajuk. I visited the REHAB fair and due to the government's tight control on marketing of new projects at that time, there were only a

RMG sector

Till now the RMG sector is the leading source of foreign currency in the country. But often we notice that for very insignificant reasons it becomes chaotic. We don't know which devils are playing the key character behind this. We feel that the government should trace and punish them. The investors in this sector are assuring us that they will give all reasonable benefits to the workers.

Our competitors might be trying to destroy this very competitive sector of Bangladesh. Recently, they have been successful in kicking us out from the manpower market of the Middle East. We should respond to the crisis by taking the necessary steps.

Md. Abdul Hamid
Assistant professor
Dept. of Business Administration
Shahjalal University, Sylhet



MUNIR UZ ZAMAN / DRINKNEWS

few real estate companies offering a small number of plots and the price was very high. I could not select any. People very often lost their hard earned money deposit to various agents which finally could not provide them with a plot, nor did they return the money.

We hope that Rajuk will accelerate the development of their current projects and take up new ones, so that Bangladeshi nationals living abroad and all others are benefited.

Azad, Sydney

Politics: varying too much?

A common question in talk shows- what lessons the politicians have learnt from 1/11. Yes, they are leaving behind examples of how to survive during political Tsunami. Instead of looking for success and lessons of 1/11 in talk shows, set up a commission of inquiry to find out the exact answers to these questions. The time has come to ask what lessons the government has learnt from the politicians.

The simple and universal message is that politics is for the politician to handle and manage. They inherit power from the people. Of course, there is exception to this, but not sustainable.

Turning to the current affairs in the USA. The most important event

is the Democratic National Convention in Denver, Colorado, to formally nominate their President and Vice President candidates.

The most outstanding feature so far is the speeches of Hillary Clinton, Bill Clinton and Joe Biden. They have laid down the foundation of the unity of the Democratic Party leaving behind all speculation of rift and division in the party created during the process of electing the presidential nominee in primaries.

It is considered widely in the media that the former President Clinton has delivered the best speech of his political career. I fully share that view. He has unified the party, laid down a clear policy framework for Senator Obama to follow during his next phase of campaign beginning in fall to successfully challenge his opponent Senator McCain of the Republican Party and win the election. He has upheld the dignity of his political family. His verse on American image abroad is a classic. He said that the world would see America not through the "example of power", but through the "power of example".

Senator Joe Biden has also very successfully projected human face in his typical down to ground approach in current politics. His reference to kitchen table conversation when children are in bed was very emotionally touching to all who listened to him. The personal life of Joe Biden is so decorated that he is a living icon in American politics. His vast experience in foreign policy and national security issues are real asset for Obama to lead America to a new height of glory and success in these fields.

A reader
One-mail

What are they doing?

I am so much curious to know about the main duties and responsibilities of an ambassador because I am confused by the activities of our foreign embassies. I know that an ambassador is a representative of the government as well as the nation and the ambassador is considered a guardian of immigrant workers abroad, but in our case the situation appears to be different.

It should change for the better. Mohammad Anisur Rahman
Abdul Gani Road, Pahartali
Chittagong

UN and world peace

The UN and its elaborate Charter for peace, individual freedom and human rights were established soon after WW2. However, it is not functioning well at all because of lack of good will and co-operation on the part of stronger nations. In particular, the right of 'self determination' is apparently a failed concept. Most of the present turmoil in the world, in Kashmir, Georgia, Chechnya, Darfur, Afghanistan, Iraq, Tibet (and perhaps even Palestine) could be prevented if this provision of the UN could be enforced for world wide peace and tranquility. An exceptional case of such UN success was in East Timor. Why can the world not see many more such cases of self determination of the troubled or disputed regions? The 'Principle of territorial integrity of a sovereign nation' (an archaic concept), must be subservient to the 'Principle of happiness and self determination of the people' of a ruled region. Size is irrelevant as states such as Monaco and Luxemburg demonstrate their happy and prosperous existence.

Mature countries like the UK are already conscious of the fact that (like modern marriage between equals), any unity must be voluntary and cannot be enforced. Local Assemblies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are free to use referendums if they so wish to break away from the UK. Peaceful and voluntary breaking up of the Czech Republic is a recent example (although Yugoslavia needed war). Like peaceful break-up from the old, there can also be peaceful reunion and the strongest case for this is the European Union (which is actually the harbinger of an ideal single World Government).

The world's stronger countries and their rulers must recognise this maturity of mankind's psyche and aspirations and give the freedom of self determination its due recognition for world peace.

Engineer Shafi Ahmed
London, UK

Irregular water supply

Nowadays, very often, in several buildings in Wari residential area the supply and flow of water in WASA pipeline is very irregular, small in quantity, causing great inconvenience to the WASA customers/consumers.

In recent years, many multi storied buildings with many, many flats have been built at Wari, wherein innumerable people are living.

How and where from do they meet their huge requirement of water supply? It is alleged that some building owners and real estate developers have fixed and connected power pump machines with the main WASA pipeline and they are sucking and diverting water to their mammoth buildings, depriving many legitimate and genuine customers/consumers of their rightful share of water.

Would WASA and the higher authorities concerned kindly look into the matter, stop misuse and systems loss of water and remove the grievances of the sufferers?

It would also not be irrelevant to mention here that WASA is pulling out and supplying billions and billions of gallons of groundwater from its more than 450 deep wells which is very harmful and dangerous for our environment and may cause a dreadful earthquake in Dhaka any time.

WASA, without any further loss of time, may arrange and ensure adequate supply of surface water from our surrounding rivers-- Buriganga, Turag, Bali etc and if necessary from distant rivers to mitigate our sufferings.

O.H.Kabir
Hare Street
Wari, Dhaka

RU incidents

For a long time, Rajshahi University has been maintaining a favourable environment of education. Many departments have become successful in removing session jam. But on 19 August, over a trivial matter, there occurred a clash between the students and the inhabitants of an adjacent locality. It is a matter of great regret that the university has been declared closed following the incident.

Clash between the students and transport labourers is nothing new. Can't we handle such matters a little more efficiently?
Alin Sayeed-Ur Rahman
Department of English
University of Rajshahi

No way out?

I am trying to survive with my two children depending on my income which is not sufficient for three of us. My elder child is a brilliant student from her childhood with great penchant for music, drama, drawing, dance etc. I was not able to give her the support that she needed. She herself tried her best and achieved good results in all aspects. She has shown her ability in her academic side by achieving 8 (eight) 'A' grades in her O-level, she didn't get any coaching or similar facilities. She achieved the The Daily Star Award. She has appeared in her A level exams with the great hope of achieving the same type of results.

By this time she has applied for a full free scholarship at different universities in the USA. She had done all these by herself without any help from anyone, but all her attempts failed only as she was not able to show any bank guarantee or any sponsor. All the negative replies from different universities shattered her dreams.

Now I am in such an economic

condition that it is not possible for me to support her studies anymore. What will be the fate of my child? It's a great question for me. She is the most precious gift from the Almighty, but I am in no position to give her the support she needs!
An ill-fated mother
Dhaka

"REHAB and apartment owners"

I would like to thank the letter writer (under the above caption).

All these years, the developers/builders have been having field days by cheating the apartment buyers through various means by keeping a certain section of the political establishment & bureaucrats 'happy'.

Now that the present caretaker government has laid down some rules to safeguard the interest of the innocent buyers of apartments, the sky has fallen on the builders/developers.

The government should in fact completely ban any further demolition of old buildings for construction of apartment blocks or construction on vacant plots for the same purpose till such time REHAB/builders come to their senses & give an undertaking to the government to strictly abide by the new rules.

Ashley Cooper
Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka

Bengalis in Brighton

There is nothing more English than to find day-trippers from London sitting on the pebble beach at Brighton, resolutely determined to enjoy themselves despite the lowering August sky. We looked down from amidst the amusement arcades and fish 'n' chips stalls on the pier, during my first ever trip to the seaside resort of Brighton and

Education and some questions



TANVIR AHMED / DRINKNEWS

I sighed as I read Nabilah Khan's cry for a 'unified education system'. I have heard it for 40 years in the UK and now here!

Some people are convinced that having different systems of education are to blame for poor education. They imagine that, if all the differences between schools were ironed out, then all schools would, miraculously, become uniformly good. But, as the song says, "It ain't necessarily so..."

I remember a conversation years ago in the UK, with a Christian minister who was involved in religious education, as I was - and I asked him about it. He growled, "There is good education and bad education. What is religious education?" Whether pupils attend a madrassah, a Bengali-medium or an English-medium school, they should surely learn the two things that Ms Khan thinks are essential - mutual respect and cooperation between the wide variety of people in Bangladesh and the inspiration and skills to be good leaders to ensure its political peace. But if, any school

of any system fails to do that, it should be closed and the staff re-appointed on the grounds that those in the system are failing its best principles! Ms Khan implies that just because schools are different, that education is 'broken' - but why should that follow?

It is not systems that make education inspiring and effective it is people! Again and again, it is good leadership - the quality of the Head, the backing he or she gets from the Management and, as Suranjit Debnath's later article reveals, the support of the parents and the whole community.

There are excellent schools and lousy schools in every system. There are religious schools (in all religions) who somehow manage to turn their pupils against religion for the rest of their lives. There are impoverished village schools with dedicated staff that are beacons of intellectual activity and blessings for a whole area and others that are a disgrace. There are doubtless English-medium schools that train their pupils to

turn up their noses at their language and culture (although I have to confess, I have not come across any) and others, like my own, which fiercely insist on a full participation in both as part of 'serving the nation' which is its motto.

What is a good education is as hard to nail down as mercury. God protect us from those who think that having a single, nice, tidy system for something as riotously creative as education, will effect anything but an enormous hole in the budget. Whatever the system, accountability (somehow freed from bribery and corruption) has to be improved yes but, in my experience and, I am sure, that of many others, uniformity has never been the answer to failure of quality.

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