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Filthy Dhaka!



PHOTO AMINUR RAHIM

As Bangladeshis, it is within our filthy nature to throw rubbish everywhere without caring for anyone or the consequences. I condemn people who throw rubbish out of their cars and houses. The government always talks about modernisation and urbanisation but no one ever talks about keeping the city clean. Whenever I visit other cities like Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Bangkok, Hong Kong and so on, I always feel how incapable we are of keeping our own cities clean. This picture was taken at a "posh" area in Banani where rubbish is dumped all over the street so carelessly that it is no

longer possible to drive on it.

Improper disposal of waste also leads to spreading of diseases. I wish the authorities would look seriously into the matter and take positive and immediate steps towards keeping the cities clean. They don't even have proper garbage trucks to transport rubbish.

Transporting rubbish in open trucks only causes the dirt to spread everywhere. Modernisation and urbanisation begin with cleanliness!

Aminur Rahim

New DOHS, Mohakhali
Dhaka

Relations with India

The relations between India and Bangladesh are deep rooted. But after 38 years, it is found that there is a huge trade deficit between the two countries. We see our negotiation skills, especially diplomatic exercises, are almost zero. No proper homework is done, while we take part in the negotiations with our Indian counterparts. It is not India, it is our limitations or failures.

In order to minimize the trade gap, we can focus on a few items that can be marketed only to the Seven Sisters (eastern part of India).

We hope our policy makers will take proper steps for resolving the unsettled issues with India immediately.
Alamgir Sujaet
Regional Sales Manager
Mutual Food Products Ltd.
Topkhana road
Segunbagicha, Dhaka

No leaders!

It is evident that the shortage of leaders in various national enterprises is acute and this has failed to draw the attention of the authorities concerned and the people at large. I do not understand why the people voted them to be in the government and the opposition, after so many failures on their part. I think that we must come out of emotional politics and send a clear message to these leaders, either to change their current political belief and strategy or leave the stage.

Now trouble is brewing in the field of sports as well. I do not understand why Ashrafal is again chosen as captain of

the T-20 team. Cricket is a game of uncertainty, but performance and consistency should always be taken into account. Ashrafal has a constant record of failures.

I am sorry to mention that we have made several mistakes in selecting our leaders in all important national areas- politics, sports and even "Susil Samaj." This Samaj is taking the charge of the so called third party and doing partisan politics under the cover of "Susil Samaj," with the full blessings and patronage of the media, especially electronic media.

A reader
One e-mail

Noise pollution

Every day we get up and have to face many problems- sound pollution is one of them. It always creates problems for students. Especially, it is created by the hawkers and it is going on from dawn to dusk.

Though the HSC exams are going on, no steps have been taken to control sound pollution in the city.

Arin
Alamdanga, Chuadanga

Education policy

Mr Kishore Mahbubani, a senior Singapore Diplomat now is Dean of "The Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy" in the National University of Singapore has published a book "The New Asian Hemisphere: The irresistible shift of global power to the East." He mainly ascribed success of East Asian economies to the adoption of seven pillars of western wisdom.

These are:

(a) Free market economies, (b) Science and Technology, (c) Meritocracy, (d) Pragmatism, (e) a Culture of peace, (f) The rule of law & (g) Education.

Our learned academicians, members of the civil society, both active and retired military and civil service bureaucrats are found busy in delivering sermons through seminars, talk shows on television, hundreds/thousands of newspaper columns in both languages, but never we came across brilliant ideas outlined above.

A few months ago Professor Muzaffar Ahmed suggested full transformation of the education system with a view to making the country capable of meeting the challenge ahead. Quality of our education has gone down, examples of which galore before us. With consternation, we observed how our workers were deported from middle eastern countries, Malaysia for disobeying the laws of those countries mainly due to lack of proper education and culture only because at home they did learn lawlessness by resorting to hartal, gherao, road block, damage to properties, capture of student dormitories etc.

Our present government has constituted a committee to formulate an education policy based on Dr Kudrat-e-Khoda Commission report. It is expected that the committee members being dictated by sagaciousness and wisdom shall frame a policy to suit the nation for the next 50 years.

KC Rezaul Huq
Lalmatia
Dhaka

DNA effect in politics

The local political analysts hardly brief the citizens about the DNA effect in politics (as noticed between parents and children). Dynasty rules have both positive and negative effects--Bangladeshis are familiar with it.

In India, the positive side is struggling to retain the flavour, with Rahul Gandhi trying to keep the flag flying. The Mogul rulers modernised governance in a Hindu-majority subcontinent for around five centuries. DNA effect fall-outs are both positive and negative; and the time-scale is long.

Both Pakistan and Bangladesh suffered from birth handicaps: build up a newborn country (central government) in a new capital (site) -two generations have noted the after-effects since 1947. The British Indian Empire lasted for about two centuries; after a long foundation work. We all are still reeling from the Partition effect.

Bangladesh had another handicap: it got liberation in mere nine months-rather premature; considering decades of civil wars witnessed in other countries.

The have-not attitude has to go; but the political leaders are not leading in the right direction. The social and moral reforms have been sidetracked; so we could not take off at the expected rate of growth.

Societies are also affected by DNA influence. The weaknesses of the DNA effect has caused a silent revolution lately -- the need for change. Imagine an unknown person becoming the most powerful man on Earth in less than a decade.

The political masters have to pay serious attention to public feedbacks; to reduce the communication gaps between the governors and the governed (at different vertical and horizontal levels).

Western concepts of democracy have to be filtered for practical application in the Eastern world (and the third world).

We are waiting for the emergence in Bangladesh of a Mandela, Obama, Mahathir, Lee Kwan or Mahatma Gandhi.
A Mawaz
Dhaka

My fallen comrades

Almost 7-8 million Bangladeshi people are working outside of Bangladesh around the world. We call them migrant workers. Because we don't have many job opportunities inside the country, we are bound to find work elsewhere. In fact, we send home an equivalent of nearly \$10-12 billion US dollars every year. This money is basically running the country's economy. Most of the overseas workers are not skilled, a lot of them go to the Middle East or the Far East. They invest their money to pay for work permit, tickets and agent fees. Many of them sell their land and all properties and borrow money from their friends and relatives.

That's why they take many risky jobs such as construction etc. Many countries in the Middle East don't have any or very poor labour laws or health and safety guidelines. Accidental deaths happen everyday because the workers don't have any protection. After the accident, there is no post-mortem, no compensation. The common excuse used is that they suffered a heart attack. The return of the dead body to home causes their loved ones to face many hassles. Our leaders and politicians have no time to think about these people. I urge the government of Bangladesh to show a little respect and gratitude to their families. The government should financially help those helpless families. Remember these people have sacrificed their lives for their families

and the country. They are true fighters.

I salute my brothers and sisters who lost their lives on the battlefield overseas. They are my fallen comrades!

Nokib-E-Kibria
Toronto, Canada

Jamaat's stand

During the BNP-led alliance government, some leaders from the Jamaat-e-Islami were in the cabinet where a woman, Begum Khaleda Zia, was the head of the government. The Jamaat-e-Islami is not true to its words. It does not believe in a woman becoming the head of the state, yet, that is what it accepted during the alliance rule.

We would like to request the chief of the Jamaat-e-Islami to strike off Islam from their party name, Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh. The authorities concerned should look into matter.

Samsunnahar
Fultala, Khulna

Israel-Palestine conflict



PHOTO AP

In his recently published book Saving Israel: How the Jewish State Can win a War That May Never end," Israeli writer Daneil Gordis makes a case for fighting a war that will keep coming back to threaten the existence of Israel. According to Dr. Gordis, the extremist Palestinian groups will never accept a Jewish state in what they consider Muslim Middle East. So Israel must accept a ever present low-intensity war for the future.

But such a never-ending confrontation between Israel and extremist Palestinian group like Hamas may not be endless if both sides show restraint. The Palestinians should reject Hamas and vote for Fatah which has entered into a dialogue with Israel. Israel, on its part, should cooperate with Fatah to bring an end to the conflict.

Mahmood Elahi
Ottawa, Canada

Digital or divisive Bangladesh?

The AL-led government, before the 9th parliamentary elections, declared a 'Charter for Change of Days' that would bring about a qualitative change in politics and national life and time and again pledged to translate the country into a 'Digital Bangladesh'. Reasonably, the people of all quarters of society with the hope of promised change in the political landscape and national affairs entrusted them with an unpredictably overwhelming mandate.

Regrettably, we are to read the news reported in more than two Bengali dailies on May 25, 2009 that the Prime Minister Secretariat has asked the presidents and the general secretaries of the Upazila and Thana Awami League committees to prepare lists with bio-data and photographs of uneducated party men to provide them with employment opportunities in phases, with a view to stopping the activities causing social disorder and social instability committed by this ominously influential lot. We would like to remind the government that implementation of this plan will result in social division among the masses, chronic frustration and deviation among the educated apolitical sections and will pave the way for the opposition parties to protest against the misdeeds and decadent move of the present government, that will consequently lead to an intractable nationwide disorder and instability. The government should bear in mind that they are a democratic government and should uphold the democratic principles inherent in the constitution of Bangladesh and shun the activities, plans and projects that are against the interest of the general masses. We would also like to remind the government that we all, both

political and apolitical, are citizens of the state and deserve to be equally treated in every sphere of life, irrespective of caste, religion and party loyalty.

So, the government should remember that they are responsible for the whole nation, rather than a political party.

We urge the government to live up to the pledge of Digital Bangladesh that requires unity and to shun the plan that will inevitably divide the nation and destroy the spirit and motivation of institutional education.

Alamin Al Azad
University of Dhaka

Attention: DSE

People invest in the shares to support growth of the capital market and also to gain financially from it. Shares in our country are bought or sold through trading houses. People use cash or loan from the banks to buy shares. When people use cash, sometimes it happens that shares are bought with the understanding that they would make the payment at a later date and they normally follow it as agreed. Clients sometimes for reasons beyond their control fail to meet the deadline. In such cases the trading house should remind the clients before they dispose their shares without the knowledge of the clients to offset the dues. I believe in this case, the trading house should give the client(s) a fresh deadline before deciding unilaterally to sell the clients' shares. If the clients fail to meet the new deadline, the trading house could then arrange selling shares to offset the dues. Here the trading house should require to consult the client(s) to decide on the type of shares they could sell to offset clients' dues, instead of making unilateral decisions.

But in reality the trading houses in most of such cases unilaterally decide to sell the clients' shares without even informing them.

May I draw the attention of SEC and DSE to the issue. They should frame well-defined rules to protect the investors from unilateral decisions made by the trading houses.

Asufferer
One e-mail

What a shame!

A front-page report of 24 May under the headline "Seven lawmakers declined to fly economy class" drew my attention. I was shocked. The report stated that the parliament secretariat had to spend \$7,00 to upgrade seven lawmakers' air tickets to business class after they declined to fly economy class! What a shame! It was 'an all-expenses-paid trip' for the Bangladesh delegation by the German parliament. What is the importance of such trips? Just to gain insights into their (German) proceedings!

On the same day, Prof Pranab Kumar Panday in his article "Declining status of RU teachers" wrote on the transport facilities of RU teachers. There are only a few buses for transporting teachers and officers. What a pathetic scene! Our honourable teachers travel standing in the doorways of jam-packed buses!

This is not the situation of RU alone, but almost all public universities.
M M Hossain Suman
Bangabandhu Hall
University of Dhaka

Volleying back....

Readers' instant comments on The Daily Star Online reports. Log on to thedailystar.net to leave your comments.

Turag almost grabbed

River grabbers back after 2 years of hibernation (May 21, 2009)

Once the only problem was 'river pollution' but now 'grabbing the rivers' is also a big setback for our nature and ecosystem.

Defaulters are getting support and showing off the thumb to citizens and the law. Without further delay, the government should take prompt and legal action against the so-called 'owners of rivers'. Common people, as well as the media, should raise their voices against the grabbers.

Md. Sadikur Rahman

I really appreciate the endeavour of The Daily Star in focusing on river encroachment and pollution.

Citizens of Dhaka are highly concerned about the dying rivers and water pollution for which they are suffering.

Kushal Das

It is unfortunate to see the greedy land grabbers destroying our rivers. This has been going on for many years - every government played an ineffectual role! **James**

While we cry for saving our nature, at the same time we play some filthy games for making financial gains. We have a government, we have law-enforcing agencies. We hope they would take stern actions to recover the land immediately and save the country from desertification.

Nasarullah

I believe people will support the government, regardless of political loyalty, when it takes the initiative to save our rivers from illegal occupation. The govt. should show some courage!

Muhammad Hasan

This is yet another ecological disaster in the making for Bangladesh. As for public awareness: large posters saying 'SAVE OUR RIVERS' could be displayed.

Mohammad A. Hafeez

We urge the government to take two steps immediately: 1) Take the initiative to clean up and restore the four rivers with the help of the latest technology

(India, China, France have cleaned up many of their rivers using these technologies); 2) Bring the polluters to justice. Incidentally, our expertise can provide the clean-up and restoration services for all four rivers, if the authorities wish to do so. If they want, we can submit a comprehensive proposal with solutions.

Ehsanul Karim

We must resist the encroachers. A section of people only blame India for the death of our waterways. We demand immediate action to stop the grabbers.

M. Ali

The proverb in Bangla 'Rokkhok e bhokkhok' applies to all the governments, including the present one. If it is the people's government, it should immediately start working on navigation and width recovery, alongside making concrete embankments like the century old Buckland Dam. The RCC embankment will also protect the river from losing its width and will be perma-

nent like we see in many European and North American countries.

Sohel Ahmed

I do not think the AL government or the members of parliament have any understanding of environmental issues.

Shaheen

The rivers surrounding Dhaka are mostly dead. We would like to see proper action being taken by the authorities to revive the rivers. Before doing that, the government needs to take a political decision. Because in most of the cases, land grabbers rely on political links.

Abu Naser Manik

The leaders should come to the realization that they also have a stake in saving these rivers. I hope that The Daily Star will continue to publish these reports. I believe that it is helping the cause by raising awareness, and now we need to come forward to save these rivers.

Shahriar Ahmed