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Swine flu

The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared a global flu pandemic after holding an emergency meeting. The swine flu (H1N1) virus first emerged in Mexico in April 2009 and has since spread to 74 countries. Hence, there is no chance to say that it will not spread in Bangladesh.

The population density of Bangladesh is huge so we are more vulnerable to Swine flu. Just a few minutes before writing this letter there was breaking news in the June 19th DS online version entitled "Swine flu case reported in Dhaka". So, now is the time to take proper initiatives to prevent this epidemic. The government and media

should make people aware of this disease and broadcast the message that they need not panic.

The ministry of health and the health authorities should make them prepare from now and every hospital, clinic and other health institutions should be ready to face the menace.

Arup Ratan Paul
Department of Business Administration
SUST, Sylhet

According to a health ministry press statement, Bangladesh on Friday, June 19, detected the first case of deadly swine flu in a non-resident Bangladeshi who just returned from the USA. Out of the seven men

screened on suspicion of having swine flu until Thursday, he, identity not disclosed, was the first to be detected with the same.

Patients with specific flu-like symptoms- a fever above 40 degrees C, cough or other respiratory symptoms- are presumed to have the new virus.

Experts said Bangladesh was exposed further to the danger of the flu as some 80 per cent people here cough and sneeze in open places.

ALSO, we need to follow our religious rules properly to escape these types of deadly diseases.

Habibur Rashid Ismail
Jamea Rahmania Fadi
Madrasa
Chittagong

the building. Therefore, the thermal performance of the factory building depends on the building form (shape and volume), the building envelope (walls, roofs, floors, windows, etc.) as well as on its users' comfort. To ensure the best thermal environment for those factory buildings, energy consumption rate accelerates day by day. But each year, the country's electricity shortage is estimated at 1000 to 1259MW. So energy efficiency in this sector is an important issue for the country.

The total energy use of buildings depends on heat transfer through the building envelope, performance of ventilation, solar gains and loads, performance of lighting, etc.

So, for energy efficient factory buildings, materials and products that effectively contribute to the thermal performance of the building must be used.

Md. Nawrose Fatemi
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Tigers lose

One Bengali newspaper has rightly epitomized the defeat of Bangladesh cricket team, or the so-called "Tigers", at the hands of an amateurish Irish cricket team with the news title "Bagher Garjon Noy, Biraler Mew Mew". What a shame and what an embarrassment for the cricket lovers and for the nation as a whole! And it is nothing new, it has been happening at regular intervals.

Is there any accountability of the country's cricket authorities? The question is who is to blame for such a disgraceful defeat? The main culprit, in my view, is the selection committee. Time and again they have come up with the wrong selection, particularly the selection of the captain and the wicketkeeper. Ashrafal as a captain has been a super flop all through, not only in international cricket, but also in domestic cricket and even in the trial matches where his

compatriots such as Shakib, Al-Hasan and Mashrafe excelled over him. Ashrafal, by nature, is a highly emotional guy who always acts or reacts on impulses and whims.

He is not a calculative strategist and not at all a cool customer, which are the basic attributes to become a captain of a cricket team. Mushfiq, the diminutive wicketkeeper, despite all his enthusiasm and dedication for the team, cannot be an ideal wicketkeeper for an international and Test playing nation's cricket team. In every international cricket match, he would certainly miss one or two easy stumping chances or diving catches. This hap-

pened in the last India-Bangladesh T-20 match. These are so simple and so obvious that anybody who follows Bangladesh cricket a little bit knows these weaknesses of the Bangladesh cricket team, but alas it seems our selection committee doesn't understand these! How Mr. Shafiqul Hira, who with the team has witnessed most of the recent defeats, was allowed to continue as the manager of the team for so many consecutive series is also unclear. Let's be objective and vocal about the cricket authorities' incompetence to save cricket.

Firoz Ahmed
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Some suggestions

It is just a matter of time to see how the budget will be for the next year but I somehow believe that some business sectors are neglected in the budget. I can blatantly say that there are business people who hang around the ministers to fulfil the demands only for their own business sectors. Whether it is FBCCI or MCCCI or even BGMEA, all these bodies talk about the needs and wants of only one particular sector, which is, of course the garment sector. Because most of the top individuals of these bodies are garment owners. We do not see any individual or group of people from any other sector who play a vital role in influencing the government. Toiletries sector is one such sector which is neglected beyond imagination. There are extremely good opportunities abroad for exporting toiletries in continents like Africa or South America or even in Eastern Europe. But unfortunately, with heavy duties on raw materials and higher interest rates on bank loans, it is impossible to compete with other countries.

I hope the government will think about other sectors as well and treat the toiletries as a sick sector and minimize the heavy duty rates on it. It should urge the banks to give loans to the toiletries sector at lower interest rates.

Minhaj Ahmed
Uttara, Dhaka

MPs and people

Elected representatives or the MPs of a democratic government are supposed to be 'employees' of the people. The people hired them to serve them. In a democracy, all men and women are supposed to have the same rights and privileges.

The elected MPs, the PM, the cabinet members or the Judges do not have any more rights than the poorest and the weakest members of the citizenry. Where do they derive their extraordinary and blatantly unfair rights from over those of the ordinary citizens to be entitled to get government or public plots without competing fairly? Should not they be required to apply for and win a lottery just like any ordinary citizen of the country?

The MPs are supposed to make laws to bring about fairness and justice for all, and the Judges are supposed to guard against any infringement. Instead, in Bangladesh, they are the 'foxes' guarding the hen houses. They are the kings; they own the country and they treat the public, as if they are their servants.

In reference to the proposed severe budget cut by the Governor, a letter writer in the May 31, 2009 edition of the Sacramento Bee in California writes, "By the time Schwarzenegger is through chopping every last safety net and social program, California will be the new Bangladesh, a symbol of hopelessness, despair and profound and inescapable poverty". When, for the sake of our next generations, will the people of Bangladesh wake up, demand their fair rights, get rid of these foxes, so that no one will hold it in such poor regard?

Dr. Engr. Mohammed S. Islam
California, USA

Bangladesh cricket

It saddens me to say this, but it seems like our entire country is perennially stuck in the phase of a journey that prompts travellers to say, "We are not quite there yet but almost there". We are close to our 40th year of independence and literally have nothing to show for it; corrupt and

Tipaimukh dam

There are many earthquakes in this world which were generated due to water load from a manmade reservoir. Moreover this region is one of the seismically active zones of the world (we all are aware of it); any large earthquake would be a big threat to the dam as there are geological evidences that the Shilong Earthquake propelled large boulders even up to Chhatak area. Any seismic failure will cause a sudden onrush of reservoir water through the Surma-Kushiyara valley and will reach up to Meghna floodplain. Interestingly, there are many ground elevations in upper Meghna valley which are just at sea level. This water will be enough to inundate about 25% area of Bangladesh by 5 ft. This volume of water would be capable to submerge the greater Sylhet district under 10-ft of water. The higher gradient runoff would be of extremely high-energy flow at least up to the downstream region of both Surma and Kushiyara rivers.

This dam will cause price hike of cement and aggregates (construction stone and sand) in Bangladesh and thus increase the construction cost throughout the country. Because the Surma River (also Kushiyara) will lose its normal navigational draft (required water

depth for navigation of river vessels/boats etc.) and bulk transportation of cement from Chatak Cement and Lafarge-Surma Cement factories will be disrupted. There will not be any active water transportation system during the lean period in a few years after construction of the dam if we do not plan for an alternative.

The landscape of Surma and Meghna floodplains will be changed and might look like present day Rajshahi region. In the lean period many parts of the greater Sylhet district will turn into semi-desert. The agriculture land will be prone to differential erosion due to unpredictable flood pattern during the monsoon. The Bangladesh Water Board might work out surface water modelling for predicting other unknown affects and work for reduction of associated risks.

I believe there are many engineering and technological solutions for assessment and monitoring risks from such a large geo-morphological modification in a complex geological environment. I understand scientists and technologists from both Bangladesh and India are aware of these and experts are thinking on the issue.

Mir Fazlul Karim
USA



A.M. AHAD / DRINKNEWS

Drivers or killers?

I am more than convinced that all of us living in Dhaka feel the pain, agony and utter helplessness caused by the inexperienced and unfit bus drivers. God only knows how they get on the roads. How come there is no control over them. And the biggest question of all: Who owns these buses? Looking at the accident that took place yesterday (June 17, 2009) at the Moghbazar rail crossing, we can clearly see the insane behaviour of the careless and notorious bus driver whose impatient move caused so much damage. However, the news reports on TV seemed to have pointed out more of the fact that NO one died on the scene, and not emphasize enough on the mindless, inexcusable act of the bus driver who could not wait a minute longer and stop before the rail. In this regard, I also want to inform you all of another very recent accident I myself was caught in where a speedy bus hit my car from behind on the airport road. I was slowing down under the foot overbridge and passed the Radisson hotel, when a 'minibus' came rushing and hit me from behind breaking the entire back window of my microbus and damaging the whole back side severely. Like a miracle, the gas cylinder of the car was not hit and the car was saved from blowing off. Surely, the bus immediately took off and NO one tried to stop the bus from fleeing the scene. (Not surprising!) Although I was lucky not to be seriously hurt, I had to undergo CatScan and other neurological treatment to check for internal brain injury. The point is simple. This is a free, democratic country, I suppose. Then, there must be rule of law that holds these irresponsible thugs responsible for their actions and they MUST be punished. Or else, we all may have to live in a city where neither we nor our children or loved ones will be safe from the horror and terror caused by these reckless, foolish, immature and negligent bus drivers.

I urge the government to be firm against these (potential) killers!

Rahat
Mahibag, Dhaka

Online trading

The world economy is now under pressure. Individual earnings from various sources can contribute to the growth of the national economy.

We need to start online share trading system as early as possible.

CNTalukder
USA

Where is our security?

We are stunned and have become very frightened by the news that a group of armed men tried to occupy a house owned by a retired civil servant, which is situated in the posh Gulshan area. The owner of the house, Abdul Qayyum, is living there along with his wife and daughter for thirty five years. The intruders said that the house is owned by ATN Bangla, a private television channel and tried to kidnap the landlord.

We are feeling totally unsafe, this sort of incidents can happen anywhere, any time. All sorts of crimes have gone up, is our home ministry sleeping? People are dissatisfied with the present situation, we request Home Minister Sahara Khatun to take necessary steps to pro-

vide security to the people. It is their sacred duty.

It cannot go on like this, we want to see concrete results.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong

RMG buildings

Ready-made garments are our number one export item. Starting in the late seventies, this sector accounts for over 64% of the country's total export earnings. There are about 2,500 export oriented ready-made garment industries in Bangladesh, those are clustered over mainly Dhaka.

Those factory buildings accommodate a large population, especially in production area. Efficiency and sustainability of this sector depends on the performance of those workers. Again, efficiency of the worker depends on the indoor environment of

Budget 2009-10



PHOTO: AFP

The proposed budget document has been well presented addressing various crucial issues relating to infrastructure development, trade, commerce, sectoral management by giving emphasis on good governance and efficient public administration. The issue of rural safety net is commendable. If it could be implemented efficiently it would achieve positive results in the rural economy, and hence, a very strict and efficient management policy needs to be ensured. Corruption and mismanagement should be addressed firmly starting from selection of beneficiaries to distributions.

Whitening of black money should not be encouraged and it must be eliminated. It gives hidden approval to earning illegally and opportunists

would take advantage of such rules.

However, we would like to urge the Honourable Finance Minister to review and reconsider this proposal, ensuring efficient financial management and economic development.

Increased tax on car is good to reduce the influx of cars on the roads, until better road management is ensured. At the same time, the government should take immediate steps to introduce better public transport and efficient traffic and transport management.

Implementation of this ambitious budget proposal will be achievable, if the tax and revenue collection process is streamlined and handled efficiently, maintaining sincerity, honesty and commitment.

Nasarullah
One-mail

Pre-schools or residences?

How many residences in Dhaka have been converted to pre-schools in recent years? May be there is no accurate statistics, but the traffic situation during school closing time only in Dhanmondi indicates that the number of such converted schools is pretty high. The debate only remains in the domain of unbearable traffic situation in a residential locality. But we seem to be ignorant of the fact that there is also a child psychology perspective of this process of conversion of schools from residences.

The single unit residences of Dhanmondi were originally designed to accommodate one or two families, but they are now forced to function as pre-schools. The small yards, where may be two to three children used to run and play, now have dozens. These contrasts call for an assessment of space quality of these converted buildings in terms of learning environment and other necessary aspects which should be addressed in a pre-school.

The overall physical space quality plays an important role in forming the learning environment of a school beside curriculum and teaching resource. Currently, in most of the cases this conversion is not taking into account consideration of space quality.

The children have a high learning curve during the early years of school possessing limitless motivation to achieve competence within their environment which is significant in the formation of the later adulthood. To ensure better adulthood, and a better society of course, the best learning environment has to be ensured in every school. Considering the present state of Dhaka, it is impossible to provide new designed space for every pre-school of the city, rather providing improvement plans for the existing ones through research is the rational step. The residences, when converted to schools, must undergo a process of analysis and design to achieve the highest level of performance.

Muntazur Monsur
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BUET

Razzak's options were open.

Why Ashrafal, keeping all other aspects aside, went for these suicidal decisions at the most crucial times of each of the matches mentioned above? He must answer these questions with acceptable reasons to the BCB. And the board should consider his answer from a professional point of view and take a final decision on the captaincy of Bangladesh team. This is my earnest request to the board.

And at the end, I want to tell Rubel a simple thing. My dear Rubel (and Mashrafe also), Suppose you are to bowl in the last over of a match where the batting side requires 11 runs to win with 5 wickets in hand. You succeed in taking 4 wickets in the same over with consecutive first 4 provocative deliveries. Well done with 4 wickets with a hat-trick! What a splendid job! Isn't it?

Now you went for the fifth delivery in the same way expecting the 5th wicket while the last batsman manages to hit a six. Now you should not worry as the side still need another 5 runs. You bowl the last ball expecting even a four will be in vain for them; and you find the ball, after being hit by the last batsman is Going, Going, Going and Gone over the boundary line. What will be the result of the game, my dear Rubel?

Suhel

One-mail

Holocaust and Israel

Six million Jews were killed or perished otherwise in Europe during the Second World War. The whole thing is identified as holocaust. President Obama during his famous Cairo discourse cited the matter as the root of sufferings of all Jews. He also touched upon the plight Palestinians are suffering in the hands of the Zionist state of Israel.

But why this analogy? Holocaust took place in Europe, not in Jerusalem and by the German Nazis not related to Palestinians anyway. Holocaust is a historic crime and perpetrators were duly punished at the end of the war. So for the crimes of Christian dictator Adolph Hitler, why should the Muslims of the Middle East suffer?

M. Sanaul Huq
Uttara, Dhaka