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### Dhaka megacity

Over the decades, Dhaka, one of the megacities of the world, is getting populated by degrees. This is really an alarming news for the city dwellers as it creates manifold problems for them but everyone along with our government ignores the issue. The capital city has become the centre of all concerns officially, semi-officially or unofficially. Keeping this in mind, people from all walks of life rush towards Dhaka in search of better livelihood. Now, the population crosses over forty million and day by day it is increasing.

Another cause of this increase in population is the same capital city which is the hub of both administrative and commercial activities. This over population worsens the present condition of Dhaka city. To solve this deteriorating state, the government should segregate the commercial sector from the administrative one. The former one can be set up elsewhere outside Dhaka city. The place can be the commercial capital of the country and the administrative capital will be Dhaka. Thus the pressure on the capital city can be abated somewhat.

Now, government effort is needed to handle the issue successfully.

Sayef Shahriar  
Dept. of English  
University of Dhaka

### Budget implementation realities!

Your correspondent's front-page headline report on June 13th about the huge task of budget implementation is a natural forethought that many of us feel. One wonders if the programme is too much for our conservative bureaucratic work mode usually tied up with endless red-tape, which is our norm of work! Side by side, in the next column by Tushir, there is the talk of a "Supervisory Body" being set up. Will it add more red-tape, or curtail it? That is the fundamental issue. It all depends on the determination of our political government, whether they have the will to take pragmatic unpopular decisions when needed, and take it quickly, and hopefully not get mired down with too many "stay orders" and "injunctions" from the courts.

Once greed and subjectivity enter into the process, with political activists and supporters going for a slice of the pie; then the doom begins! It can bring the process of progress to a grinding halt.

It is not wrong to apprehend that the gap between expectation and execution is quite large. Only determined and purposeful political will can transform these good ideas to realities on the ground!

S.A. Mansoor

Dhaka

### School education

In the smaller cities and rural areas, the government could approve prototype models for

architectural and civil engineering, for quick construction of cheaper hostel accommodation for the school and college students; using local low-cost materials (patronising the SMEs).

The kitchens need attention to ensure hygienic facilities and working conditions, (now ready-made spices are available in powder form). Just buy the ready-made components, and assemble (including self-assembly). Include mass produced furniture for student dormitories (polythene/plastic furniture are cheaper, last longer, and save natural wood).

Then, the books and stationery items could be produced cheaper. This is a grey area (press reports). Production and printing may be decentralised (why travel to Dhaka for everything?). We are exporting bicycles. Make bicycling popular. Then comes the cheap, mass produced (locally assembled) laptop PCs under Digital Bangladesh scheme.

Educational market is big business (volume involved). Why not have cheaper uniforms made to order? The school management boards monopolize this sector. Pay attention to suppliers of tiffin to schools (in the British era we used to pay only four annas per month for tiffin in a government school in Dacca/Dhaka). Pay attention to good housekeeping. Go into details; and study prototypes (talk less); and do not neglect the future generation (of rulers).

AHUSNAIN  
Dhaka

### TIN

Many seminars, discussions, meetings were held during the pre-budget period. Bright sons of the soil were sharing their views and practical thoughts about how to prepare the budget and how to implement it and if the country can run as per their prescriptions, Bangladesh will be "Sonar Bangla" immediately. All these were table talks and carried no value.

Eighty percent of the total population do not understand budget and have no interest on it. Because a good or bad budget will never give them any benefit. They will remain poor and a few will enjoy benefit out of it.

It is reported that the govt has decided to increase the number of TIN holder from 7,00,000 to 10,00,000. It is very funny when we see that out of 150 million people, only 7,00,000 are TIN holders. Why the number is so low compared to total population? The reply is that general people are very afraid of those who are associated with these organisations. There are a number of examples that general people do not get any co-operation from the departments like Customs, Income tax, Police including all types of service oriented departments though their services meant for people's welfare and benefit.

Today we are planning to increase the number of TIN

holders. It can never be achieved until our present taxation system is changed. It should be simplified and the tax payer must know that the service is for people's welfare and not for harassing tax payers.

In a recent meeting, the Finance Minister mentioned that Awami League is for the welfare of the poor people. We thank him for his nice comment and want to let him know that poor people are also eager to pay taxes for the welfare and prosperity of the country provided so-called systems are eliminated by introducing a new system through which people can exercise their responsibilities and rights.

Md. Mosharaf Hossain  
One-mail

### Ashraful's foolish words!

Mr Ashraful, just after our team's loss to Ireland you said that you needed to visit an eye-specialist. You did not accompany your team on returning home and stayed back. People say you thought it was a smart idea to cover your poor (silly) batting performance. They also say that it was nothing but a foolish, shameful excuse to avoid the media. Let's analyse a few of your statements you made after coming back from your mission T20 World Cup 2009:

1. "I'm not afraid of criticism because it's nothing new to me." I hear it and I immediately remember what the former US President Mr Bush said after dodging a shoe: "It's nothing new to me." You are right, Mr Ashraf, I clearly understand your sentiment. You wanted to say that if the president of the most powerful nation of the world was not afraid of shoes, why on earth you should be? Good logic. Do you practice law?

2. "But I think it's unwise to take a final decision after one match performance." Have we got to believe that you have forgotten how to count numbers? How many times have you played silly shots and got out? How many times after how many matches have you said "Our batting wasn't good"?

3. "But I want to continue as captain as I am enjoying the role and trying my level best." Mr Ashraf, I can't blame you in this case because everyone knows there are some people in the world who play on flutes when their countries burn.

4. "In the first T20 World Cup praises were showered on me for my 61 off 27 balls". Mr Ashraful, you aren't going to suggest our government to pass a new law to announce everyone 'Not Guilty' if he/she has done any good to anyone at any stage of their lives, are you? You are the captain. At least, take up some language courses so you won't make the whole world laugh at us.

Anyway, Mr Ashraful, being truthful, has put one mean-

ingful phrase: level best. He said he was trying his 'level best'. Now our cricket management should understand that his level best may be the best to him but is the worst for us. And the decision is ours. And it is the sooner, the better...for us and for him as well.

Brother Tito  
One-mail

### Toxic effect of vitamin - A

The nationwide programme of administering vitamin A & deworming drug in children created huge controversy about the safety of drugs in children. In the national dailies many reports said that children felt sick after taking medicines during the programme and some children even died soon after. Meanwhile, a government committee investigated the incidence and claimed that no toxic effects were observed in children taking these medicines. This statement directly contradicts the reports published in the national dailies and broadcast by the electronic media. Despite the claim of the government committee, the fear of the local peoples has not vanished yet. If this is not clearly removed from people's mind, similar programmes will not succeed in future. But the success of these programmes is crucial for improving the health status of the children. So it's very important now to go through a more extensive and credible investigation so that the truth can be found out clearly.

Here some points could be noted which can help in investigation. Both vitamin A and albendazole are safe drugs and they are used in many countries. Even in our country these drugs are available in chemist shops and conscious people usually take these medicines at regular interval. But so far no toxic effects have been reported in our country. So these medicines are not the cause of the controversy rather the quality of the medicines might be the reason. Though the programme was observed all over Bangladesh, complaints came from only a few districts. This explains that the drugs of central stock were not toxic; rather the drugs of stock of some districts were possibly toxic. So the storage condition at district level and expiry date of the drugs can be important clue to this controversy. The probe committee can consider the chemical analysis of the drugs. This analysis will determine whether the drugs had deteriorated during storage. It can be done easily by sending samples to drug testing lab / ICDDR, B / University.

Furthermore, if possible some samples may be sent to CDC, Atlanta to determine exactly what went wrong. The dosage of vitamin A is also important. As it is a fat-soluble vitamin, it retains in the body for long and overdose may produce toxic compounds inside the body. This also needs to be considered. In this committee at least one epidemiologist and one sociologist should be included alongside clinical experts. An epidemiologist has the expertise to collect wide range of data and analysis of these statistically. The sociologist has the capability to collect the sociology related data. This is important to know how the people reacted to the programme and how the government can remove their fear. The success of similar programmes in future largely depends on this understanding and taking actions accordingly.

However, I hope that relevant government authorities will take appropriate action to find out the exact reason of the controversy. And the government should need to take actions to rebuild confidence in the peoples mind.

Nihar Ranjan Ray  
Ex. Research Officer  
ICDDR, B

### Drug addiction

Presently, drug addiction is not only a national but also a global problem. This addiction gives rise to social crimes. When the addicts cannot afford to buy drugs, they commit many kinds of social crimes.

In our country, the drug problem has recently become acute. Thousands of families in cities, towns and even in rural areas are directly or indirectly affected by it. Drugs lead people to their woes, failures and frustrations. We all need to abide by the religious rules if we want to live in a peaceful way.

Let us all, always, say 'NO' to drugs.

Habibur Rashid Ismail  
Jamea Rahmania Fadil  
Madrasa  
Chittagong

# The passing of a pop icon



The king of pop Michael Jackson died after suffering a cardiac arrest on last Friday. With his demise, the world has lost a sensational pop star cum dancer who was famous for his exceptional on-stage live performances.

Although he was not above the criticism throughout his controversial musical career, making headlines one after another for all the wrong reasons; nevertheless despite all of the physical changes and allegations towards him he was a darn good artiste and entertainer and therefore I hope the media should see the good in him rather than point out the negative aspects of his life.

It was in 1982, the turning point of his career when Jackson released "Thriller" -- the best selling album in history, with "Beat It," "The Girl is Mine," and "Billie Jean" rocketing to the top of the charts. His music videos made him a phe-

nomenon -- the ten-minute video for "Thriller" is considered one of the best music videos of all time. "Thriller" enjoyed 37 non-consecutive weeks at number one and sold more than 40 million copies. It won eight Grammys in 1983 -- a record for which he will be remembered forever. During his visit to Las Vegas few years ago, my uncle had a chance to chat with this icon. He even wished to pay a visit to India and Bangladesh in 2012. But alas! the dream to watch Michael Jackson live will remain a dream forever for all of us. Michael Jackson was loved and admired by many. He will be always remembered for his contribution in the field of pop music. He will always be the king of pop music, now and forever. May his soul rest in peace.

Nazmus Saquib  
Dept. of English  
Stamford University  
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Michael Jackson was unquestionably the biggest and brightest pop star of the '80s, and certainly one of the most popular recording artists of all time.

While Jackson ruled the charts and dazzled audiences with electric dance moves like the backwards "moonwalk" in the 1980s. His once-stellar career was overshadowed by his colourful public behaviour, his startling physical transformation and allegations of child abuse.

One of the most influential figures in pop history whose career included the highest-selling album of all-time, "Thriller," Jackson had been preparing for a concert comeback in London next month he had dubbed "the final curtain."

Although the death of Michael Jackson would eventually be a story we'd report one day, the passing of Michael Jackson at the age of 50 is a complete shock that sends a massive, heartfelt ripple effect throughout the entire music industry.

Peter C. Rebeiro  
Indira Road, Dhaka

News of Michael Jackson's sudden death from a suspected cardiac attack at the mere age of 50 came as a big shock and disbelief. He was preparing for a comeback music tour in England after a gap of some turbulent years. Michael Jackson brought together the divided black and white music fans in the USA and touched millions of hearts worldwide. He will be fondly remembered through his music.

May Almighty rest his soul in peace.  
M. Emad  
Oxford, UK

### Story of a new dawn

It is heartening to learn that ATEL-The Daily Star "ENGLISH IN SCHOOLS" programme has started its voyage towards ensuring a brighter future for the students across Bangladesh through correct English learning in their own school premises. This is indeed a pragmatic step towards preparing our future generation in a competitive world of limited resources and opportunities.

I sincerely wish successful implementation of the 'ENGLISH IN SCHOOLS' programme with intended outcome and long-lasting impact.

Professor M Zahidul Haque  
Chairman  
Department of Agricultural Extension & Information System  
SAU, Dhaka

### Daylight saving

It is good to see that like 70 countries of the world, Bangladesh has also decided to advance the clock by one hour to save the daylight in an effort to minimize the prevailing power crisis. It is definitely

a historic decision. The countries which have adopted the DST (daylight saving) system could manage to save on power consumption and we also believe that our country will do the same.

But what are the architectural or interior designs of the offices and buildings of those countries? In our country some modern interior designers introduced such new design that does not allow sunlight to come in because they believe this might hamper the so called smart looks made with various colours and for this they conceal all the windows. On an average the numbers of light bulbs are used in a single chamber of any office are more than what is used in a 3-bedrooms house. For the sake of the "LOOK" people have no choice but to do office with all the lights turned on. This is not the end; in the name of corporate style or culture some modern business houses encourage to do wearing a suit and a tie in extreme summer with air conditioners turned on all the time.

On the other hand, most of the time while building our houses we do not follow the

approved plan and make houses so close to another house in the name of beauty. We use tinted glass that sometimes makes it very difficult for the sunlight to come in.

So besides giving a big thank to Government of Bangladesh for taking a step towards saving power, would also like to request to introduce a clear guideline for interior designs for the offices. Otherwise, no matter how many hours we advance our clock, sunlight will be staying away from us and will not be of any use.

M Tariqul Islam (Jewel)  
SS Khaled Road, Chittagong

### Big talks

The statement of State Minister for Science & Technology that the Rooppur nuclear power plant would hopefully start generating power in five years adding 1000 MW of electricity to the national grid is big news for the nation that is suffering from crippling power crisis. This would-be nuclear power plant was established about half a century ago on 260 acres of land at Rooppur in Pabna. Even today I cherish the fond

memory of participating in procession demanding the construction of this nuclear power plant during my student life at BUET in late sixties. Responsible Ministers of this government are also telling that the first Padma Bridge at Mawa and the second one at Paturia will be completed within the next 3-5 years. The Prime Minister herself told that whatever it costs, the government would retrieve the country's complete river system.

This is good news but also seems to be big talks. It is not clear how the colossal costs of these projects will be managed. There is not enough money for setting up even the conventional power plants. If one Padma Bridge at Mawa can be materialized, a major part of the country will be benefited with positive impact on our national economy through utilizing Mongla port. In reality, it is seen that the government cannot even maintain normal ferry services by dredging the rivers. So one can question how it will be done for all the rivers of the country.

Engr. Md. Aminul Hoque  
Khalishpur, Khulna

# Rivers in peril



Bangladesh is blessed with valuable water resources- beautiful rivers and abundant rainfall. But unfortunately, our rivers are now under threat from pollution and grabbing.

It is laudable to see the effort of our newspaper to create mass awareness for saving our rivers.

An action committee can be formed with the involvement of environment friendly companies whose volunteers would collect information about the people or companies that are responsible for polluting our rivers by industrial wastes, pollutants and toxic materials. They would also give info about those who are building unauthorised structures on it.

After getting this information appropriate agencies would take legal actions against the perpetrators.

There should be strict monitoring of sewerage disposal. Sewerage rules and fees, applicable to commercial and private buildings, should be introduced.

Rainwater washes off oil and grease into storm drains which then flow into the river. Smart sponges -- a synthetic polymer that is chemically selective to hydrocarbons absorbing up to 3 times its weight in oil and grease, can be installed into the storm drains.

A hotline can be created vis-à-vis organizing volunteers for clean up, reporting abuses, etc. This will not only provide jobs but will also teach people of the importance of pollution free rivers for our survival.

Syeda Akhtar  
Gulshan 1, Dhaka

# Taxi and the autowallas

The population of Dhaka city is over 1 crore. The taxis and autos plying on the roads of Dhaka have proper "meters". But none of these vehicles operate on "meters". People are compelled to pay the fare demanded by the drivers, which is exorbitant. You will not find such a situation in any country of the world. Our police administration has miserably failed to control these taxi and autowallas.

Now we have a strong elected government. We have a Home Minister, Deputy Home Minister, Home Secretary, IG Police, DIG Police, Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Suptd. of Police, Dy Suptd. of Police, Traffic Police Officials, Thana Officers etc. etc. In addition there is a new dept. named "RAB" to assist the Police Dept. But they have not been able to catch the culprits and give them exemplary punishment. This is really a bad show on the part of the entire police administration.

In every country of the world taxis operate on "meters". Therefore commuters do not face any difficulty. Our neighbouring

country India has a unique system of taxi service in most of the metropolitan cities like Kolkata, New Delhi, Bangalore and Madras. The Police Welfare Association operates these taxi services efficiently. Each taxi has a meter and the driver will charge only the amount shown on the meter, which includes "waiting charges also". All taxis have a wireless connection and the police are constantly in touch with each of

them. The passengers also trust these taxis for safety and fixed charges.

It is time that our police administration should immediately look into the problems faced by the millions of people in Dhaka and Chittagong and take corrective action for the safety and security of the people.

Acitizen  
One-mail

