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STAR

Universities

I became stunned at reading the article entitled 'Imperative of co-existence: Public and private universities' published in The Daily Star on December 30, 2009. The writer has given a comparative analysis on the qualities of private universities versus public universities. The writer has just wanted to spotlight that the private universities in our country are not worse than the public universities. The article has boastfully tried to prove the point by giving the examples of Harvard University, University of Oxford, and Boston University. Needless to say, he has drawn the examples of the private universities of the developed

countries, especially of the US, not from those of Bangladesh.

I would like to ask him what are the minimum requirements of campus area, accommodation and research facilities for setting up a university.

If you look at the private universities in our country, we can easily see that a multi-storied building with a giant signboard is enough for establishing a university. Are these private universities or govt approved Certificate Selling Centres?

Atik Rahman
A student
Dhaka University

on drawing up appropriate adaptation measures, it called for forging a national consensus on this very vital issue as we prepare for the next round of meeting in Mexico in 2010.

Your comments that BNP's "knee jerk" reaction stemmed from ignorance and lack of understanding of the issues sounded like an echo of the comments of the State Minister for Environment. Such uncanny resemblance is indeed worrying. One hopes it is coincidental. My understanding of responsible journalism is that it is all about objectivity and non-partisanship. Echoing a government Minister's politicised comment, even if coincidental, runs the risk of getting tainted as towing the government line. One expects a newspaper like The Daily Star to steer clear of such a course.

Shamsher M. Chowdhury, BB
Former Foreign Secretary
and newly elected
vice chairman of the BNP

No time game, please

People have heaved a sigh of relief and feeling very happy to be able to return to the old times. They turned the clock hands backwards. It was a welcome step from the government celebrating the New Year and we hope the government will not change it again.

The news that the time may be changed again in March has made people very anx-

ious. We fervently request not to change the time again, it was a failure, people from all walks of life protested against it. They were confused and in the rural areas people did not bother to advance their clocks.

The government made an experiment, it failed, so it must not be repeated. The government is claiming DST scheme has saved electricity but we disagree with it, if at all electricity has been saved it was due to the unbearable load-shedding which gripped the country, even on Fridays and Saturdays load-shedding was going on unabated. So, for the sake of people's well being the government must drop the DST, once and for all.

Like the "name game", the government must not start a "time game."

Nur Jahan
Chittagong

War heroes

Freedom fighters are the most valuable asset of the nation who should not be neglected, because their sacrifice gave us an independent nation. Still a large number of them are not recognized, and they are living in abject poverty.

The nation as a whole should address the issue. After all, we are insulting ourselves by ignoring the great freedom fighters.

Enamul MA
Dept. of English, DU

Admission fee

Admission fee for primary or high school has been increased greatly for the educational year of 2010. Each and every government or non government, primary or high school has been asking for a fee of Tk 500 to 1400 for admission.

Poor families are the worst sufferers of the admission fee hike. The future of a large number of students will become uncertain if nothing is done in this respect.

Mahmud Ali Kabir
Ex-BSS Correspondent
Gopalganj

Parliament sans opposition

The BNP has now come up with their 'true demands' behind the demands they were making in public.

For long, the party has been trying to tell the government indirectly their "ashol dabi", the real demand to create a congenial atmosphere for them to attend parliament.

Even citizens like us understood what the BNP was after, the govt and its experts failed to guess it right.

Very recently, the BNP leaders specified only a few like quashing of corruption cases against their party chief and her sons and a congenial atmosphere. If the first one is met, their next demand is the "cantonment house" and the cleanliness of the very parliament floor where two of their senior leaders have faced investigation.

Their third and most important demand should be the "trial of one-eleven heroes" the heroes who foiled all their election engineering attempts prior to the one-eleven take-over.

Why is the government failing to work out the BNP's strategy? Everyone says that it is the government who should bring them in at any cost. Why then the govt is keeping mum and not fulfilling their real demands?

Shafiqul Islam, NY

PM's call

Our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina sought cooperation of the media in maintaining uninterrupted run of the hard-earned democracy in the country, as she said it was sine qua non for protecting people's rights and interests. She made the call when a delegation of Newspaper Owners Association of Bangladesh (NOAB) met her at her official residence on 27 December.

The prime minister urged the media owners to present various successes and achievements of the government before the people and not to publish 'untrue' news.

In fact, we always expect the media to be impartial in telecasting/publishing news.

Habibur Rashid Ismail
Jamea Rahmania Madrasa
Chittagong

Hooliganism

Every 31 December night becomes a night of vandalism and lawlessness. It is an unfortunate matter. Hardly any Christian celebrates it in this rowdy and shameful manner. Why do we? It is not even our religious festival! This is a matter of national shame for the country. It has to be stopped.

For the Muslims, the Hijri

Shrinking land



LITON RAHMAN / DRINKNEWS

It is noticeable that we are losing agricultural land day by day. Loss of cultivable lands causes shortage of food production. So we are depending on other countries like India for essential commodities.

One of the main reasons behind losing agricultural land is the establishment of more brickfields in villages. The issue deserves a closer look.

Md. Abdul Wahab
East Jurain, Dhaka

BNP's reaction to Copenhagen Summit

I would refer to your editorial which appeared on the December 26 issue of your daily on BNP's reaction to the Copenhagen Summit on Climate Change. The tone and content of the editorial has indeed dismayed me, as much as it would have dismayed others who had closely followed the events in the Danish capital.

A well respected Latin American leader has in fact catalogued the drama that unfolded in the closing hours at Copenhagen as participating leaders ran against time to literally thrash out a deal that in the end did precious little to provide real solace to those who were hoping against hope for a deal that would address their real concerns. This has since been publicised. A reading of that would most definitely dent your defence of the dynamics of the Copenhagen meet and its outcome.

There is absolutely no denying that universal concern on climate change and the consequent global warming and sea level rise has all along centered on what has caused this phenomenon. The answer is simple: unchecked emission of carbon by the industrialised world over the last century in the name of development and maintaining a certain life style. Its impact on geographically low lying countries like Bangladesh would be catastrophic unless major polluters, which include some countries now in the process of rapid industrialization, do something about it with due sense of urgency and serious-

ness. Scientific research over the years clearly testify to this. It is here that Bangladesh delegation to Copenhagen, including the prime minister, had failed to highlight the frightening concerns of the developing and most vulnerable countries and only sought compensation funds.

This is exactly what the BNP had brought out in its reaction post Copenhagen, no more and no less. Even Begum Khaleda Zia's remarks to the media while the meeting in Copenhagen was in progress had clearly warned of our representatives being distracted by short term, uncertain and undefined monetary considerations and in the process miss out on the need to focus on the causes, and not just the effects, of climate change. So what was wrong with that?

That Copenhagen failed in achieving anything meaningful in terms of carbon emission cuts is now a globally recognised fact. Blame game between and among participating countries was fast and furious even before the ink on the 'accord' had dried. British Prime Minister Gordon Brown called it a failure. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon was almost equally candid in expressing his disappointment. Sweden's Environment Minister called it a disaster. US President Barack Obama has since joined the chorus of critics, albeit, qualifying it as a first step. Only very recently Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh said that leaders were able to make only limited progress at the Copenhagen Summit and that no one was satisfied with the result. In this gloomy backdrop, our prime minister's choice to hail the meet as a

success is indeed most baffling, and an insult to those who know and those who care. It was also most insensitive to those unfortunate millions who risk losing most from sea level rise.

BNP's reference to the outcome and our government's role was precisely on these lines. What prompted your critical editorial is indeed most surprising, or is it?

BNP's reference to Farakka and the proposed Tipaimukh dam also has to be seen in this context. More than just a bilateral issue, these are most serious environmental issues of immediate concern. Any Bangladesh government that misses this point, or worse, remains silent on it when the occasion arises to raise it, would be doing a great disservice to our people. The environmental, ecological, economic and social impact brought about by the Farakka Barrage is out here for all to see. What Tipaimukh dam and the Fulertal barrage could do is also quite evident, and Copenhagen was all about environment.

Killing of unarmed and innocent Bangladeshis by the Indian BSF with alarming regularity is a bilateral issue, the unresolved land boundary demarcation and the sufferings of those living in the enclaves is a bilateral issue, the widening trade gap between Bangladesh and India is a bilateral issue. The impact of the Farakka and Tipaimukh is a different ball game altogether. I wonder how you could have missed this point.

The editorial missed out, or chose to miss out, the concluding part of BNP's reactions, which stated clearly that while there should be no let up

Jute industry



MUNIR WASHIF / DRINKNEWS

Jute used to be called the golden fibre of Bangladesh. Jute is a long, soft, shiny plant fibre that can be spun into coarse, strong threads.

Adamjee Jute Mills in Narayanganj, Bangladesh, was the world's largest jute mill with 1,939 looms and 25,000 employees up to 2002 when it was closed. Still there are several major jute product manufacturers in Bangladesh.

However, India has become a gateway of jute products to the world and Bangladesh is the source for them to collect high quality raw jute and fibres.

In China, there are very few mills that are specialized in manufacturing jute products. Jute is being widely used in their traditional textile mills, where jute is just another fibre among others like silk, ramie, and flax.

Jute is 100% bio-degradable and recyclable and, therefore, environment friendly. It is the cheapest vegetable fibre procured from the skin of the plant's stem. It has high tensile strength with low extensibility, this helps to make best quality industrial yarn and fabric.

The best source of jute in the world is the Bengal Delta Plane (Ganges Delta), most of which is located in Bangladesh.

It is one of the most versatile natural fibres that is used in raw materials for packaging.

We have to proceed in a planned way to make the best out of jute.

Shohag Mostafij
MBA (Strategic & International management)
University of Dhaka

Imagine a situation where Bangladesh is one of the richest countries in the world and we are recognising others for their contribution in poverty alleviation. Shall we ever see such day?
Concerned citizen

Congratulations! Hope you will continue the job for the betterment of the poor. We pray for your long life.
Hasan A Rouf

Abed bhai deserves to be congratulated by all Bangladeshis not only for his Knighthood but also for showing the world the way to reduction of poverty.
Shafiqul Islam

The nation is proud of the founder and chairperson of Brac, Fazle Hasan Abed, who has taken the initiative to alleviate poverty of the marginal people in rural Bangladesh. We pray to the Almighty for his long and healthy life.
Mayen Uddin Tazim

I am so proud to be a student of Brac University founded by Mr. Fazle Hasan Abed.
Nafiza Nasarullah Ena

Congratulations! We are very proud.
Sohag

We salute this golden son of Bangladesh. Professor Yunus and Mr. Abed are the pride of Bangladesh. We pay our tributes to Mr. Abed and wish him a very happy and long life.
Masud Isa

Congratulations! It's great news. We are proud of Mr. Abed and I wish in future he will be honoured for the outstanding contribution of Brac under his leadership to alleviation of poverty globally.
Mizanur Rahman

Muggers taught a lesson in bravery (January 3, 2010)
A brave college girl Friday caught a mugger and gave him a bloody nose, three days after he mugged her on her way home in Khulna.

Hats off to Tama! This is how we must all stand up against the audacity of the antisocial elements. Tama did the right thing and her actions should be a lesson for all.
Azman

The New Year starts with the story of the bravery of a young girl. Wish many more will follow her instance.
Rezauddin Chowdhury

Bravo, Tama! Great! The police might have taken years to capture the culprits, but you have taught them the lesson.
SZT

Very brave girl. I think we all must learn from this girl how to defend ourselves.
Saeed Hasan

Bravo! The country needs more courageous girls like you to fight back, but do not ignore your security.
Professor Abdullah Dewan

Wow! Well done Tama!
Colonel Millat (Retired)

Wonderful Tama. Congrats! I do want to see our other sisters doing the same -- have the courage to face the criminals and thrash them.
Masud Isa

No doubt a brave act. However, she should not have acted on her own and should have reported the incident to the police for her own safety and security.
Salah

Here in Canada school children learn how to avoid kidnapping or trouble from the unwanted people and also how to kick or bite to discourage the troublemakers!
Baz

Our government should take preventive measures like tree plantation programme, building embankment over coastal areas etc. on a priority basis to minimize the problem of climate change at a reasonable cost.
Mohammad Zia-ul-Haque
English Department
International Islamic University Ctg

New Year resolutions

According to the rule of nature, a new year becomes old and disappears into the infinite space of time to give birth to another new year. The old year 2009 has just left us and the New Year 2010 arrived with new hopes and aspirations. Let us forget our differences in mind and in thoughts to unfold new horizons of peace, friendship, and development. Let's make our hearts free of hypocrisy, sycophancy, and imitations. Let's learn to examine everything in its right perspective. Let's broaden our minds to give due honour to deserving persons.

Let's limit our ambitions to our eligibility. Let's not undermine other's feelings, emotions, and sentiments. Let's take a fresh vow to build up our nation and to make Bangladesh a dreamland full of great people.
Professor M Zahidul Haque
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University
Dhaka



ONLINE VOICES

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

Brac boss to be knighted (January 1, 2010)

The founder and chairperson of Brac, Fazle Hasan Abed, is to be knighted by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for his services to alleviating poverty in Bangladesh and abroad.

In effect, the British Knighthood has been honoured for bestowing this distinction upon a world-class pioneer for his contribution towards restoration of parity among people.
Faridul Alam, PhD

Congratulations to Mr Fazle Hasan Abed for the Knighthood. He deserves it.

My concern is who will lead these prime organisations like Grameen Bank, Brac, and Gano Shasta Kendra after the natural exit of the founders.
Faqrul

Great news on the New Year. Men like FH Abed make us proud. This is rec-

ognition of years of good work. Our politics and corrupt politicians made us the top corrupt nation in the world. But the living legends have earned great laurels from international arena to redeem ourselves. Congratulations, Mr. Abed.
Saleque Sufi

Congratulations to Mr Fazle Hasan Abed for being recognised internationally once again. We are proud of him as Bangladeshis and hope others will follow his example.
MZ

It's great news and honour for us. But let's not get carried away by this.