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# Role of media

It has now become apparent that some newspapers work as silent supporters of some political vision and modulate the readers' minds in the direction of the political philosophy of a chosen political party. As a television viewer, one is subjected to the same experience as that of the print media. The media may have a liking for some political philosophy but the problem arises when it becomes blind. The role of print and electronic media is found to serve the purpose of different political parties. They make programmes focusing on the party interest, whereas the media should have guarded the interest of the people without any compromise. The media by their unbiased, pro-people role, through their news, editorials and programmes, can make people aware of their legitimate rights.

Without the support of the media, the political parties would not dare to indulge in undemocratic anti people activities. For a democratic Bangladesh, a committed and determined pro-

people media is a must.  
**Md. Delwar Hossain**  
East Rampura, Dhaka



SHAHADAT ANNESHI/DRINKNEWS

take money from students, this is going on in front of the law enforcement agencies.

People behind such activities should be given exemplary punishment.  
**Mahmud Ali Kabir**  
Ex-BSS correspondent  
Gopalganj

## High speed train

This refers to a news item published on the 28 December 09 in The Daily Star about China unveiling world's fastest train link a train travelling at an average speed of 350 km per hour. Well, that's China. They have the resources and the willingness to serve the people. What about us, the people of Bangladesh? Would it be too much to expect High Speed Train (HST) service from Bangladesh Railway between Dhaka and Chittagong? Let's try to dream of travelling from Dhaka to Chittagong in about three hours or so. Well, that would not be high speed train, but that of medium speed. By definition, HST in China, Japan, some of the Asian countries and in Europe have a speed of 250 to 300 km per hour or so. In France, it is called Train a Grande Vitesse (TGV) having a speed of 280 km/hr. However, test runs have achieved 400 to 500 km/hr around the world.

Let's face the facts. We, in Bangladesh do not expect trains travelling at 300 km per hour. What about 120 km per hour or so? Even at that speed, we would be able to travel Dhaka to Chittagong in about three hours; the distance covered being 346 km. This shall be reduced by 81 km via Laksham as per proposed Railway Improvement Project. In that case, the travel time could be less than three hours.

If that be so, what improvements are required? For moderate speed, overhead electrification may not be required. What is required for sure is the introduction of improved double railway tracks, the other being fast/medium speed engines. Reducing curves, level crossings and perhaps few over passes could also be required. Is BR in a position to do these and that too at a reasonable and affordable cost?

If fund is the question, the private sector may be involved. Asian Development Bank and other funding agencies would take about 10 to 12 years compiling all their formalities of project appraisal and so on till the completion. On the other hand, if private sector is allowed to participate, a project of this magnitude could be completed in four to five years.

Having seven to eight high/medium speed trains between Dhaka to Chittagong would significantly increase BR earnings. Goods train may also be introduced. This would significantly reduce road traffic load. At present hundreds of luxury and ordinary buses ply between the two cities. Except for the week ends and peak days (Eid holidays etc), most of these buses run at their 30 to 40% capacity. If that be the case, some of these buses could be asked to ply in the city areas (Dhaka & Chittagong) and a few may ply in the shorter routes, say less than 40 km, one hour travel time. CNG three wheelers should not be allowed to ply in the national highways. All these factors would significantly reduce traffic load in the highways, reduce incidence of accidents, reduce travel time and save foreign currency. This would indirectly increase our GDP.

As taxpayers, could we expect or dream to have high/medium speed trains

from Dhaka to Chittagong in about three to four years? Subsequently, such trains could be introduced for other routes. Would the authorities concerned please try to throw some light on this?  
**Gazi A. Rahmani**  
Bailey Road, Dhaka

## Dearth of energy resources

The nation is now experiencing shortage of gas, water and electricity in different parts of the country. These problems have become very acute. According to experts, natural gas is depleting at an alarming rate, which requires the government to take the necessary initiative for the future fuel provision. Amid these acute crises, we all are expressing apprehensions. We are frequently asking and putting blame on the government for these ordeals. But is it only the government failing to cope with these problems? In fact, the government alone cannot bring any positive change unless there is cooperation and collaboration of its citizens.

Water level is going deep down due to excessive felling of trees in not only coastal areas but also in many other regions. Misuse of natural gas is going on, as we keep our burners on just to save one match stick! Unnecessary power consumption like keeping the light and other heavy power consuming electronics gadgets on is partly responsible for load shedding. However, to make our nation digital, proper utilization of natural resources is a must. And merely hurling challenges and blaming the government won't bring any blessings for the nation.

Of course, the government has a great responsibility to do something effective to keep things under control.

**Hasnat**  
American International  
University-Bangladesh  
(AIUB)

## BDR mutiny report

I have doubts about an authentic and accurate final report on BDR mutiny being published.

I expect that the government will publish an unbiased and true report in this respect.

**Md. Abdul Wahab**  
BBA (IUB)  
Independent University  
Bangladesh

## Loan disappears!

A surprising BSS report was published in a local English daily on 3 January. It reported a government high-up's statement that Tk.107 crore loan to Jatiyo Matshajibi Sambaya Samity by the previous government cannot be traced! This is the most surprising news of this New Year! One really wonders how could such a thing happen? However, apart from this bomb-shell statement, nothing else was mentioned about the matter. This too is surprising; given the investigative trend of our newsmen.

The matter is very serious, and it needs to be investigated and transparently reported through the national news media.

To begin with, the background under which such a loan was issued represents an unacceptable level of financial irresponsibility.

This matter needs to be thoroughly looked into.

Unfortunately, this news item was not published in other English dailies and one wonders why! I bring this to the notice of all readers.  
**S.A. Mansoor**  
Dhaka

# Ship-breaking yard

The ship-breaking yards of Chittagong have become death traps for the hapless workers. Fatal accidents are very common there. Though the owners of the yards earn huge amount of money through this industry, they are indifferent in ensuring security for the workers. Despite the recent tragedy, yard workers are compelled to work without gloves, safety costumes, etc. Moreover, these ship-breaking yards are a great source of environment pollution. By this time Faujdarhat and Bhatiary, nearby areas of Sitakunda,

have become worst affected by pollution. In those areas 21 species of fish have become extinct and some 11 species are on the verge of extinction.

Bangladesh is the chief buyer of 2172 old ships from the European countries. So, the ship-breaking yard owners should be responsible enough to ensure facilities for the workers and at the same time they should use pollution free technology.

**Mohammad Zia-ul-Haque**  
Dept. of English  
International Islamic University Ctg



STAR

## Congratulations!

I am really proud that Fazle Hasan Abed is to be knighted by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. This is a worthy achievement. He is not only the founder of Brac but also one of the most influential personalities of our country. He has shown the world his quality only through his work.

My greetings to Sir Fazle Hasan Abed.  
**Mir Abidur Rahman**  
Department of English  
South East University

## Pre-primary education

It is a matter of great regret that primary education is in bad shape in our country. In the developed countries the authorities give more emphasis on primary education because it is the foundation of student life. We have learned recently that the present government is going to reshape primary education by setting up more schools, recruiting more teachers, providing tiffin facilities at a cheap cost, giving 100 taka to every student per month, distributing learning materials, etc. And a decision was taken to start pre-primary education within two years. Basically, a student cannot cope with the curriculum of class I at an early age of 4 or 5. An orientation is needed at that age. And not every student comes from an educated family.

So, pre-primary education is essential in the context of our country. Not only that, proper monitoring is needed for a smooth education system.

**Md. Zahidul Islam Zibon**  
Dept. of English  
International Islamic  
University, Chittagong

## Banning religion-based parties

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed's statement that the Awami League regime will ban religion-based political parties is unfortunate. I think such a move will create further acrimony and disunity among the people of Bangladesh.

Subsequent political crisis and clashes may claim lives. Instead of addressing such touchy and unnecessary issues, the government should work hard with the help of the people of Bangladesh to advance our economy and our national standing in the international arena. Whenever we step out of our land, our national pride meets disillusionment, as we become

aware that our country lags far behind other nations in terms of good educational and political culture and prosperity. Perhaps, our standing in international politics is one of the lowest in the world. The political parties that have been in power are largely to blame for this. Banning religion-based parties will not give us bread and butter. Let us address the pressing issues of poverty, illiteracy, corruption, campus violence and other social and political ills, which have been crippling the nation ever since its birth.

Banning religion-based political parties may not meet the objective the Awami League has in mind. Turkey has put such a ban for a long time, and that did not stop the pro-Islamic AK party from coming to power. If the Awami League bans Islamic parties in Bangladesh, people involved in those parties will emerge with "secular" names and will continue the same political activities they have been doing under religious banners. What is more, such a ban is undemocratic and is absent in the western world.

Europe has a tradition of major Christian parties. For example, Germany has been ruled on-and-off by the Christian Democratic Union. Other Western countries also have Christian political parties. For example: Australia has Christian Democratic Party; Canada has Christian Heritage Party; Norway has Christian People's Party; Russia has Christian Democrats; the United States of America has Christian Coalition, Christian Coalition of Florida, and Christian Falangist Party of America.

These seem okay and nobody goes for banning them. The problem seems to occur when Islam is associated with political parties. This is unfortunate and part of the process of demonising this noble religion. The Awami League may receive accolades from western governments for such a move to ban Islamic parties in Bangladesh; and this will only add to their big list of double standard policies.

**Ibne Younus**  
Elephant Road  
Dhaka

## Quack doctors, spurious medicines

Some days ago we watched in a TV report that some dishonest traders have been supplying adulterated medicines to several pharmaceuticals. We have come to know that there

exist not only quack doctors but also fake pharmaceuticals. The present situation seems to be like "all thieves are cousins".

Though the quacks cannot prescribe perfect medicine and appropriate doses they are treating the patients without any fear. The unaware people take the medicines prescribed by the quacks and become further sick.

Besides, there are the brokers who take the patients to the particular clinics to get commission.

These quack doctors, fake pharmaceuticals and the brokers can be punished under the existing law. Therefore the authorities should take quick action for the benefit of the people.  
**Advocate M. Saiful Alam**  
Anandnagar  
Savar, Dhaka

## Sea level rise and Bangladesh

Climatologists predict that in the middle of the next century, the temperature of this earth may rise by as much as 4 degrees Celsius. This could catastrophically reduce food production, destroy or severely damage wildlife, raise sea level and thereby flood coastal areas and farmlands.

The alarming news about Bangladesh is that due to the rise of the sea level, the lower southern part of the country may one day go under water. The main reason for global warming is carbon dioxide gas produced by the burning of fossil fuels and forests, and the pollutants such as methane and chlorofluorocarbons.

We can minimise it by raising public awareness.  
**Habibur Rashid Ismail**  
Chittagong

## Textbooks

The government has claimed that they have been able to distribute textbooks to all primary and secondary school students in the country. But the reality is different. Students have not got all the books for all the subjects, many students have not received even Bangla, English and Mathematics books. Some schools are distributing old books. Some new books are already in the market for sale, according to daily newspapers.

In Gopalganj some students have received books stamped with a line "book delivery programme 2005."

Many students have complained that their schools are asking for money for the books. Though it is prohibited for the government schools to

# Good films

In old times watching films was the main source of entertainment for the general people. In those days they used to go to watch movies with whole family to celebrate any event. But with the passage of time the scene had changed and the educated people stopped going to the cinema. Because most of the films were full of obscenity.

But the scene is changing gradually with the tremendous effort of some filmmakers. We have watched some good films like "Monpura," "Third Person Singular Number" and we want to watch these types of films more.

If such types of films are made, I do believe that people again will throng the cinema halls.

**Bipra Kanungo**  
Momin Road  
Chittagong

