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Gas crisis

The gas crisis in Dhaka city is the talk of the country nowadays. People are going through a tough time. Daily affairs have come to a standstill. It is seen in the various electronic media that housewives are struggling to cope with their chores and cooking at late midnight to get satisfactory pressure of gas. During the time of need in the morning the pressure remains too low to cook. Houses having children and sick elders are no doubt in a chaotic condition. Question comes why this is happening around?

The very basic theory of economics can be applied here--- the demand of gas is high, but the supply is very poor. The more urbanization and industrialization we are heading for, the more we are in need of gas. Gas is used

for cooking, producing electricity, for running mills and factories and what not? In coming days, it will be a Herculean task for the government to provide uninterrupted supply of gas. But, this natural resource is being spoilt due to our carelessness and callousness. Sometimes, some of us keep the fire of oven on to save a match stick! It is also a common picture of some city dwellers to put clothes over the burning oven to make them dry. We don't try to understand that it is our national loss.

Every year, in the month of February and March, we talk about patriotism. Is spoiling national resources carelessly our so-called patriotism?

It is time to think about the alternative source of energy. Bio-fuels and solar energy are some

good options we have in our hands. Alternative energy system might lessen the dependence on gas. Current gas crisis will soon be over, we believe.

Abu Tayub Mohammed Farhad
Chittagong

For decades now, people living in Bangladesh have taken gas for granted. Bengalis are very wasteful in nature and all these years they have been leaving their gas cookers running even when not required. They never ever thought that this gas may run out or run low one day and people would face a severe crisis. In other countries like Kenya, people have to stand in long lines in order to purchase gas in cylinders and then use it sparingly to make it last.

In my home, I always shout at domestic workers when they leave the gas cooker running for no reason and I wish everyone would do the same. This crisis was just waiting to happen and I believe that people deserve.

I also urge the government to stop supplying gas to every house unlimitedly and start producing gas for cooking in cylinders.

It is high time that people in Bangladesh realized the value of our limited resources and stop taking them for granted.

Aminur Rahim
New DOHS, Mohakhali, Dhaka



PHOTO: STAR

Physicians' fees

In Bangladesh patients are frequently cheated by doctors. When a patient meets with a doctor to get rid of a disease or to reduce health related trouble one has to pay very high fees. A top bureaucrat of government gets Tk.45,000 as monthly salary, that is, Tk.1,500 (in average) per day. In the same economy a specialized doctor after regular job earns additional Tk.10,000 every evening. It is collected from 20 patients @ Tk.500.00. Some Doctors attend more than 20 patients every evening. More than Tk.100.00 should not be charged from a patient per visit. A Doctor can earn Tk.50,000 in 25 working days in a month in addition to his regular salary.

Doctors are not greedy traders! Those aiming to earn huge money should not come to this profession. It is a common complaint that at every first appointment a doctor suggests a long list of diagnostic tests. Suppose ten tests are performed following the advice of the doctor, it is commonly observed that in most events all tests show normal results.

In a few events one or two test results show some deviation from the normal (standard). After looking at the reports, the doctor usually smiles at the patient and says, "Thank God your tests results are good". So, the common men think that on most occasions doctors advice unnecessary tests. So, there must be a nexus between the doctors and the diagnostic centres. Bangladesh Medical Council can change the situation by advising and by censuring the doctors.

The fees of the doctors

must be re-fixed at a reasonable level so that common men can get the service of the specialists doctors.

Mohammad Ashraf Hossain
Ramna, Dhaka

An interesting issue

Your 7th January issue was remarkable in its presentation. The front page left hand lead article and the centre-piece photograph highlighted the visible contrast on river cleaning and pollution simultaneously. It cleverly managed to bring out the relevance and importance of the issue presented, to catch the readers' eye, and allure him or her to read through it!

In similar style, the back page, on one side reported the management disaster ahead for the railways, and the other side had your Chittagong report of three persons killed in a railway accident! Between the two, was the photograph of an un-manned rail and road crossing, with a car approaching it. The notice in the photograph, was possibly put up as an early warning signal! The only fly in the ointment however, was the sub-heading in Shahnaz Parveen's article. The appropriate word should have been "locomotives" and not "engines", which is a generic term for almost all prime movers!

This aside, it was an artistic presentation, with contrast and news balance; highlighting with emphasis on the core issue that was reported.

Congratulations for a nice presentation of mundane matters possibly on a dull news day!

Engr. S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Western culture

Satellite channels are bringing about all sorts of alien cultures to our society. Western culture has started to influence the tastes of our young generation. Our young generation do not like to enjoy Tagore or Nazrul songs. They are fond of band, pop music, obscene films etc. People find less interest in their own culture and like to lead a life following western modes.

We should make our young generation conscious about our own culture and heritage.

Abdul Azim
Department of English
International Islamic University Chittagong

Good decision

While addressing the opening ceremony of the National Primary Education Week 2009 at Osmani Memorial Auditorium on 7 January, the Prime Minister - Sheikh Hasina- declared that her government would make education up to degree level free to facilitate poor students to obtain higher education.

We welcome this initiative!
Habibur Rashid Ismail
Jamea Rahmania Madrasa
Chittagong

Adopting unfair means

Copying in exams is a serious problem. It's really making a bad impact on our students. But in recent times, with the contribution of all people from the government and public, copying in SSC and HSC exams is less noticeable.

But recently I read a report that the students of Rangpur Medical College were using mobile phone for copying in

the exams.

It is really a matter of great concern.
Sohanur Rahman
MBBS 37th batch

Destruction of Palestine

Scenes of Israeli soldiers shooting Palestinian children throwing stones filled TV screens around the world and generated a lot of sympathy for the Palestinians, as well as more support for their cause.

The Israelis soon got the point that open violence and oppression against the Palestinians weren't getting them anywhere, especially with the cameras of the international media rolling. So they're trying another trick now, and one which has been very successful so far-the "silent death and destruction" ploy.

Every day the Israelis torment or afflict the Palestinians in little and big ways, out of sight of the camera: Houses are bulldozed, trees are ripped up, roads are blocked, Israeli settlements are expanded, Palestinian lands are confiscated, Palestinians are prevented from working or going to school, men are rounded up for questioning, "militants" are shot, and men and women are stripped, humiliated or beaten up. And these things happen in Palestinian-ruled cities and lands, at the hands of heavily armed Israeli soldiers which occupy them.

The Israelis provoke the Palestinians to violence, but they can't strike back very easily against the troops and tanks that surround their cities and patrol their roads. So Palestinians send suicide bombers inside Israel to inflict horrible destruction on Israeli

civilians. That destruction is anything but silent! Scenes of Israeli suffering, carnage and death fill TV screens around the world and make the front pages of major papers.

Israel then has its justification for more open attacks on Palestinian areas to "stop the suicide bombers" and "round up the militants," and they go further and further in their retaliation, destroying as much as they can. Naturally, since these are "military operations," the cameras are banned. If any atrocities happen to occur, there's no proof. Palestinians are wounded or killed, their houses and cities are crushed, their government institutions are obliterated, their leaders are humiliated.

All that just perpetuates Palestinian rage and revenge attacks. But when Palestinians strike back at Israeli civilians with suicide bombings, these open attacks are used against them, both in the media and by the Israeli military, which launches devastating counterattacks where they do their dirty work secretly.

The open attacks by Palestinians produce worse counterattacks by the Israelis and more secret destruction, which produces more open attacks by the Palestinians. So the vicious cycle goes on, and it's one the Palestinians are losing, as they're being gunned down, humiliated!
Ted Rudow III, MA
Menlo Park, CA

Wastage of water

May I request a greater sense of justice concerning the supply of water in times of shortage?

I come from a country where water is metered to every household (i.e. people pay for water according to how much they use) and where, in the dry part of the South East of the UK, where I live, we often have 'hosepipe bans' in times of water shortage. I am thus shocked by the waste of water in the more affluent sections of Dhaka while there is serious deprivation in other sections.

1. I live in Gulshan and some drivers are washing their owner's cars, by hosepipe, every day. Others are using hosepipes to clean the garages very often. In both these cases, with some extra effort (which people in my country are prepared to make) one can use buckets instead of hosepipes and save a lot of water.

2. The hot water system in many apartment blocks is not switched on permanently, in order to save money. This means that one has to run the tap for up to 20 minutes to get hot water. Many is the battle I have had with the developer, about this and got nowhere! I am so ashamed that, nowadays, when I want a good wash in the basin, I fill a big Thermos flask from the kettle.

Unless the authorities are determined to make Communists out of environmentalists, I suggest some regulations are made and a real effort made to enforce them some amusing television advertising, maybe?

Angela Robinson
Gulshan, Dhaka

Visa

I believe that more or less 40% of both Hindus and Muslims of both India and Bangladesh have near and dear ones on either side. The passport and visa system was introduced during Pakistan time due to

Jyoti Basu's passing

Some years back I was travelling by train from Dum Dum along with a friend to visit his home at Barrackpur. On board the electric train, we walked through and found a nearly empty compartment and parked ourselves there. After some time we noticed that two gentlemen in white dhoti-kurta were standing and talking to another seated gentleman also in white, who had his back to us. Rolling along, we were engrossed in our gup-shup.

As we reached Barrackpur we were a bit taken aback by slogans at the station. We got up to get down from the same door those three gentle had also lined up to disembark. To our utter surprise we found that it was Jyoti Basu himself who got down from the train and was received by the local party members. He then walked along with them, crossed



over the foot-bridge and walked all the way to the ground where a meeting had been arranged.

Our politicians may think I am making up this story, as they would never think of travelling, other than by a big Pajero and an entourage of police and administration along with, of course, many of their chamchas.

Farhad
Shyamoli, Dhaka

the strained relations between the two countries.

The situation has completely changed now. We have very cordial relations between the two nations - Bangladesh and India.

The visa system is a great hurdle and hassle for the people. I would therefore request you to please publish in your newspaper articles requesting abolition of the system.
Dr. Md. Nurul Absar
One-mail

Email registration

Internet is one of the latest gifts of science. Day by day, its users are increasing all over the world. In our country too, we have a large number of internet users.

But like any other invention of science, this is also a mixed blessing. Huge number of students and young people spend their time with facebook which often gives them wrong information. Some people enjoy befooling others. Any person can use another person's name and also photo to open a facebook account. How can it be possible and permissible? Are we living in the jungle? I am not against facebook culture. But I strongly want its accessibility to be restricted. Many women are now getting constantly harassed. Through this facebook culture, many people learn to be defaulter at the very early stage of their life. If the same continues, then in the name of socialization, we would face a chaotic situation in our society. We don't want such amusement that may bring havoc to our society by destroying the mutual trust among us. There is no problem if people would use it only to broaden their friend circle. But the problem is bound to arise when people would provide wrong information and continue mischievous works.

Moreover, a new user often does not understand the directions and constantly loses his email address along with password. Like any other valuable thing our password too may be stolen. Hackers can do many things which are beyond the imagination of the common people.

It's my request to all the Internet companies to begin an intelligible, lawful email registration as that of our mobile numbers. There must

be different kinds of restrictions. Fake addresses must be deactivated.

I want more and more people to use Internet. It is not only a media of communication but also a good library. But once it goes into the hands of the dishonest people, then the innocent people would be the victims. I hope my letter would draw the attention of all the well-wishers and think-tanks of this country.
Pradip Das
Dhaka

Ask for judicial conclusion

The party in power has already withdrawn many cases filed during the CTG administration against their leaders on various charges like tax evasion, extortion and misuse of power. The charges of those cases were findings of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). Many of the accused were charge-sheeted while some were under process of trial. Latest news reports suggest that many more such cases are under process of withdrawal terming those cases as 'politically motivated' ones.

There may be some, but it is very hard to believe that all the findings of the ACC were purely politically motivated and had no prima-face evidences. So, whole-sale withdrawal/quashing of cases are not a favourable decision to contain corruption in future.

In line with the government's actions, the main opposition's first two conditions among their latest 10-conditions are quashing of cases against the party chief Begum Khaleda Zia and her two sons to create a congenial atmosphere for them to join parliament. We were told by the government that the ACC had found hard evidences of misuse of Zia Orphanage funds.

Her elder son is also a co-accused in many extortion cases with his friends. He is now on bail and living abroad for treatment.

The leaders of both groups, instead of asking for fair trial to prove their innocence, are demanding withdrawal of cases. The honourable resolutions of these cases should be a fair trial in the judicial courts to facilitate them to clean their skin if they were innocent, as they claim. This would have been a much better choice for them to restore their lost image. If the cases are withdrawn their public image will remain as dark as it is now. The public belief is, they are not innocent, they did a lot of corruption and made their fortunes by unfair means. We earned the title of the "most corrupt nation" for many consecutive years due to corruption at all levels of our society.

The corrupt businessmen who deposited their unpaid taxes by evading taxes are now demanding their money back. What an amazing demand! If the corrupt people get scot-free like this without trial, we don't know where we will end up. We will not know their real faces and will remain as corrupt as we are now and our politicians will exploit us continuously.

We request the accused of so-called "politically motivated" cases to please plead for fair and quick trial to facilitate them to come out clean to their supporters.
Shafiqul Islam, NY

Rights of women

In line with the modern feminist movement, the Bangladesh govt. has enacted several acts and revised the existing ones from time to time to help the women in society enjoy their legal rights and justice in the familial matters, where they tend to face injustice and discrimination by their male counterparts.

But things still quite unchanged compel the authorities to mull over enacting even harder laws and imposing them strictly with a view to establishing the equal rights of women in the true sense.

Muhammad Didarul Alam
Sitakundo, Chittagong

Housing sector

Mr. Abdul Mannan Khan, State Minister for Housing, deserves thanks and appreciation for his comments to reveal the hard truth about the activities of land developers and developers in the private sector. The minister has very rightly said that the members of these associations place attractive advertisements to sell land that is twenty feet under water and flats or apartments without government approvals and thus deceive people who spend their life-long savings for a plot or flat.

The minister would do a great job if his ministry and the government come forward to do something meaningful to rescue thousands of clients who have been and are being cheated day after day by the members of these two associations that are after the interests of their members only. On the other hand, there is no association or guardian of the general clients /people who are being deceived by the formers. It may be true that the developers' associations have invested around TK 70,000 crore in the housing sector and employed people in it but no one keeps the account of general people of middle and low income groups that are being cheated by the members of developers' associations through selling plots & flats under fake certificates, selling one plot or flat to more than one buyer, cancellation of the booked ones on halfway on false pretexts and causing untold harassment and sufferings in refunding the money and/or handing over the plot or flat if finally that happens.

Some news media also reported that the developers' associations called the minister to prove the allegations or resign! I would request the minister to please open a post box or complaint centre and invite the sufferers to lodge their complaints and there is no doubt he will receive enough proof in favour of the bitter truth exposed by him.
Engr. Md. Aminul Hoque
Khalishpur R/A, Khulna

Haiti scene

Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince experienced a massive earthquake and its ghastly effect still pervades over there. People trapped under the debris and rubbles are yet to be rescued and the UN and other agencies are rushing to the place.

In this Caribbean country, after this havoc, the common people are fleeing the wrecked-town as shortage of drinking water, looting, homelessness, insecurity are haunting them. We wonder following the devastating earthquake how the survivors will recover.

Bipra Kanungo
Momin Road, Chittagong

The death and devastation caused by the earthquake in Haiti is really sad. But the people who have survived the earthquake will have to live with the pain of loss of near and dear ones. Lack of water and food is acute. The aftershocks are also dangerous and may reach the intensity almost close to the main quake. The international communities should make concerted efforts and expedite the necessary relief operations to alleviate the sufferings of the people.

Mohammed Sadullah Khan
Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



PHOTO: AFP