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Help Haiti



PHOTO: AFP

Haiti, a small Caribbean country, was hit by a dangerous and devastating earthquake on January 12, 2010 with intensity 7--9 on the Modified Mercalli scale (MM). Killing thousands of people, the massive tremor destroyed almost all the infrastructure including hospitals.

Immediately after the earthquake all the countries of the world rushed to Haiti to rescue and help the victims. Bangladesh has also sent a medical team to treat the injured Haitians.

Meanwhile, the United States has come forward with a huge volume of aid to help and assist the earthquake victims. US President Barack Obama has made a hearty appeal to help the devastating earthquake affected people of Haiti. In an appeal issued by the White House, the President said:

"The reports and images from Haiti of collapsed hospitals, crumbled homes, and men and women carrying their injured neighbours through the streets are truly heart-wrenching. As we learn more about the extent of the devastation, our thoughts and

prayers are with the people of Haiti...I have directed my administration to respond with a swift, coordinated and aggressive effort to save lives...This is also a time when we are reminded of the common humanity that we all share...."

On the other hand, former US President through his 'Clinton Foundation' also fervently appealed for help for the Haitians. Bill Clinton is also coordinating relief and humanitarian activities in Haiti as the UN Special Envoy for Haiti. It is gathered that former US President George W Bush and former US President Bill Clinton will be jointly involved in coordinating relief works in Haiti.

We sincerely hope that all the nations of our globe will extend their hands to the Haitians in mitigating their suffering and in reconstructing their broken infrastructure and economy.

May God save us from devastating and destructive natural calamities!

Professor M Zahidul Haque
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University
Dhaka

door of co-operation has been opened in many fields. People of the entire sub continent will be benefited if the opportunity can be fully utilized. Bangladesh is an equal partner in the road of development. Sheikh Hasina went to India to strengthen that partnership. Our main opposition party should shun the mentality of begging, bringing or giving. We want trade and co-operation not aid and humiliation. Thanks, Sheikh Hasina, for heralding a new era of relationship.

M. Sanaul Huq
Uttara Model Town, Dhaka

People have mixed opinions about the recent visit of Sheikh Hasina to India. I have no comment on this, but surely at least on one count it can be debated. The people's lives have already become too miserable because of the traffic snarl. This jam became unprecedented on the day of the return of the Prime Minister as the airport road was blocked. People's inconvenience knew know bounds. They were stranded for hours together. It took around 5 hours to move from Uttara to Farmgate. The vehicles sometimes moved, limped or stood still. The passengers in the vehicles and those at the bus stations suffered the most. It must be mentioned that neither the buses nor the stations or bus ticket counters have the facility to help people answer to the call of nature. Due to this the old, the sick and the children, females and even young people suffered. This was man-made and could have been avoided. The inconvenience caused to the people was also noted by The Daily Star newsmen in its issue on 14th Jan at page 1 & 15 under the caption "City Struck by Welcome Nightmare".

If I remember correctly during the caretaker government, once during the visit of the Chief Advisor, the traffic was held up to clear way for him that caused some problem to some students who could not report to exam centre on time. When this was brought to his notice, he instructed that no special arrangement for him be henceforth made. He wanted to travel as the common man. That was great. The Prime Minister may also share the same view, but it could be the "Chamchas" around her who might have done so (blocked traffic) to appease her and to display their "super loyalty" although some of them might be among those who proposed the minus two formulae in the name of reforms.

We hope the Prime Minister will take note of this and ask the functionaries not to create unnecessary hurdles for the common people during her incoming or out-going visits. This will improve her image with the common people.

Acitizen
Onemail

Too much celebration!

It is reported in some dailies in Dhaka that the roads from all directions leading to Zia International Airport were occupied by the cheering supporters of the AL govt to welcome the Prime Minister at the airport on her arrival, after what they called, "a successful state visit to India". The processions chanting slogans of "Joy Bangla" warmed up the Dhaka city which looked like, as if the Prime Minister had conquered India and was return-

ing home with her heroic forces. Well, there is no harm in celebrating for winning a war or big games but anything excessive is bad. The celebrations created a huge traffic jam.

We are sorry to mention that except in some third world developing countries, these sort of celebrations creating public hazards are not seen. Our leaders love celebrations more than their achievements to earn credibility over their adversaries but do not think about the loss they are causing to the people. "Too much" everything is bad and celebrations at the cost of sufferings of people in the street, I believe, do not earn good will of the people, it rather annoy them even if they accept the achievements.

The Prime Minister might have been very happy to see hundreds and thousands of her cheering supporters at the Airport but she might not have given a second thought why so big and so much. She might not have also given third thought that she has earned "annoyance" of some others.

I hope in future our leaders will give a serious thought about it and advise their supporters to restrain themselves from excessive celebrations.

Shafiqul Islam, NY

BNP and BJP

Our prime minister's visit to India has been a much talked about phenomenon both in Bangladesh and India. The heated debate still continues in our media and public sphere about the pros and cons of the visit. Many believe the visit to be a promising one considering the unresolved issues lingering for the last three decades. The prime minister of Bangladesh herself has termed her visit to India and done deals as hundred percent fruitful and the scale is obviously much more lenient to Bangladeshi side. On the other hand, the opposition has accused the government that it has not seen our country's interest.

I do not want to give any certificate to our government's claim as well as opposition's negative attitude towards the issue, but as a citizen what I realize is that our opposition has not played a constructive role on the issue, compared to the role played by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). One might ask, could not BJP protest against our PM's visit as they are not in power? Or what if they would raise the issue of not providing transit from India to Nepal for the benefit of Bangladesh? Could not they halt the agreement through political movement and take advantage in the next election out of this issue? I think the BJP is quite mindful about those issues and they know how ordinary citizens would react if they go against their will.

So, should not the BNP take a lesson from the BJP as both are in the opposition's seat?

Actually, it is not the politicians who determine the fate of the people rather people have their own thinking and imagination to decide the political parties' fate. This reality, most of the times, goes unnoticed. I am not saying that the BNP should follow the BJP's politics but at least the former should know the thinking of the common citizen. At the same time our political parties should not think that all citizens are divided into two broader lines and guided by the foisted political principles all the times. I think we have more swing voters than the diehard

Municipal waste

I have gone through the UNB report on the subject published in the pages of a local English daily on January 9th. An expert from IUBAT talked a lot about recycling of municipal waste; however never mentioning a word about "Waste Concern", a private organisation, which had pioneered and is still recycling municipal garbage, since about a decade back in Dhaka city.

This pioneer venture was the brain-child of Engr. Imamuddin and his enterprising colleagues. In Bangladesh, we have many "experts", who talk a lot about ideas about which, we the layman may not know; yet these experts are unaware of what is happening around them! So much for experts and their observations.

However, rational garbage management should be taken up by Dhaka City Corporation. They should begin with segregation of household waste and refuse to begin with, from there they can

go on to producing fertiliser, and selling off recyclable waste like tin-cans, plastic materials, glass wares and other metallic and non-metallic refuse. This will need creating awareness, followed by training and reorganisation of the DCC refuse collection and management set-up, at all levels, starting from the top! They may even ambitiously explore the possibility of power generation from municipal refuse with setting up a joint venture private-public effort in this direction.

This could be a pragmatic and rational way ahead for DCC, to manage its growing refuse handling and disposal.

However, since this idea is coming from a "student" of alternative energy, and not an "Expert", by any yardstick, I wonder if the relevant authorities will even take this matter seriously at all!

Engr. S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka



MUNIR UZ ZAMAN / DRINKNEWS

Disappointed

A few months ago, there was a news item published in The Daily Star on how Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina declined to sit in a royal chair at a function. Such austerity gesture was praised by the media including The Daily Star.

Now that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was on a state visit to India, and took her sister Sheikh Rehana, why is the media including The Daily Star silent on the mockery of austerity? What is more disheartening about this is that their visit to India is being paid by the Bangladeshi taxpayers.

This is certainly not the change we expected from Sheikh Hasina.

Ifthekar Islam
Washington DC, US

Mr Alamgir's comments

I am surprised and very upset that such characters who violated all government rules are accusing other people of corruption.

How could Mr. Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir start agitation against the government being a government officer at that time?

Iqbal Mahmood, Ph.D. P.E.
Corona, CA

BCL and AL

From the moment Sheikh Hasina's AL came to power, her party's youth and student wings have been very busy with all sorts of ugly business. Their latest victim is the leader of another student wing, Bangladesh Chhatra Moitre.

They bring shame to our society and they insult our culture. But more importantly, they have been sending us a message and the message is this: we are invincible and we will do absolutely anything we like. And every time this government makes announcements like "stern action will be taken against BCL men..." the government simply proves that point.

This government has done absolutely nothing except offering these pointless warnings. No matter what you say, these BCL men belong to your party and we hold you responsible for their crimes. If your party didn't fund them and recognise them, these diseases would not exist today.

It is high time that all our political parties got rid of their student and youth wings.

Azad Miah
Oldham
UK

Private universities

The article which was published in The Daily Star on January 8, 2010 with the title "Universities" forced me to write this letter. Obviously, the govt did not approve private universities to be certificate selling centres.

The govt approves a private institution with a vision that students will finish their study peacefully. We must not be oblivious of this truth.

Fathema Akter
Dhakkhin Khan, Dhaka

PM's India visit

Sheikh Hasina visited India to improve relations, understanding and mutual trust. But it appears from BNP chairperson and secretary general's version that she was perhaps on a tour of invasion. They should understand that these days countries cannot be invaded rather their heart can be won with sincerity. A new

The Lady next door



When the two dignitaries were exchanging pleasantries, it occurred to my mind why can't the two ladies learn from her.

When the question of nationality was raised, she stepped aside and invited the incumbent PM to take charge. What an easy and simple solution, this is true patriotism. Had this been the case with one of two ladies, they would have surely fought unto death to cling on to power. The situation is so serious, that oars and bamboo poles are required in order to drive out the opponents from the powerhouse.

The other Lady is just next door, yet it is so difficult to learn from her. Why is that so? I think the answer is known to all. I have heard rumours that the son of the next door Lady does not even own a car. By stepping aside, the Lady next door has not demeaned herself, rather she has become the more exalted.

Whatever the country has achieved since independence is all due to individual efforts and the government has very little or no contribution at all. On the contrary, it can be said that at times it works as an impediment towards progress and this is all due to lack of good leadership. It is very unfortunate that this nation is deprived of a good leader. Whenever there has been a little ray of hope it has been diminished. Let us learn the good things from the great leaders in order to serve the country meaningfully.

Saleh Mohammad Ayub
Kalabagan, Dhaka

Tipaimukh dam

Tipaimukh dam will have a serious, adverse impact on the downstream part of the Barak river basin, which is in north-eastern part of Bangladesh, and known as Surma-Kushiyara-Meghna river basin. It will severely affect Hydrology of that area due to release and blocking of water as per India's need. As a result, BD will have more water when it will not need it (i.e. during flood season), and will not have adequate water when it will need it (i.e. in dry/draught season). Inundation Pattern and River-Floodplain-Wetland Ecosystem in Sylhet and Moulvibazar area will be seriously hurt. Bangladesh's morphology will be adversely affected

due to excessive river erosion in Barak river, Surma-Kushiyara river and in Kalni river. Dam break and similar disaster will cause initially 25 meter water depth in Barak river, Surma-Kushiyara river and in Kalni river along with many areas in Sylhet district.

The entire area is earthquake prone and probability of earthquake will increase manifold in that area due to artificial blocking of water by India.

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