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# Sharing of river water



PHOTO BY: FROZ GAZI / DRINKNEWS

Bangladesh is not self sufficient in food grain. About 1.5 million tonnes of food grain is imported annually. Over and above, the population is increasing at the rate of 1.17% annually. So all-out effort is necessary to increase the production for self-sufficiency.

Supply of water for irrigation in adequate quantity and in time is a pre-requisite for a good harvest. But,

unfortunately, our irrigation is mainly run by pumps. (centrifugal and turbine). During winter, water is pumped from rivers and canals making them almost dry. This leads to shortage of water for household work.

So, sharing of water of common rivers should be taken up more seriously with India.

**Serajul Islam**  
*Gulshan, Dhaka*

box-item which reported about an exceptional pariah dog who got an appointment at Nepal Red Cross (NRC) office with a monthly salary of 1,000 Nepali Rupee! As stated, the dog with a broken leg came to NRC office and started offering voluntary service through checking entry of unauthorized persons into the NRC premises by barking. This caught the attention of the officials who appointed the dog as a guard. The dog is reportedly doing a wonderful job and the NRC authorities are even considering dismissal of their night guard!

What a lucky dog! As I was going through the above news, the poor and ugly condition of our street dogs and cats flashed across my mind. Nowadays these animals can hardly find any food even in the roadside garbage bins. As a result their health is deteriorating day by day. They are becoming so lean and thin. Although free animals, these pariah-dogs and street-cats are an essential part of our eco-system and we should take some care to nurture them by providing food and even medical treatments.

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

### Going big on biogas!

Rahman's news report, highlighting the Trust Bank's thrust on financing the biogas sector, is good news for energy-starved Bangladesh. However, I felt that the report was to an extent incomplete to be really attractive for prospective investors or motivators who can encourage their sources in the village level to go for it. His statement, and I quote was "A beneficiary will buy four cows with the money". It would have been better to state "A beneficiary can set up a biogas plant and also buy four cows with the money". That would have been more to the point. However, no mention was made of the repayment terms and the period of repayment, which are important factors for the borrowers.

Without the important and relevant information, the report was to some extent incomplete. Another important information missing was that whether the interest would be calculated on simple or compound rate basis; as well as if there was any up-front or transaction charge, that had to be paid to the bank.

The borrowers need all the detailed information, so that there are no hidden charges anywhere. Of further help could have been to tabulate a sample calculation, say based on a loan of Tk 25,000 for a period of ten years, showing the frequency and amount of each instalment. Something like this would have been more helpful.

However, this is an attractive proposition, and hopefully it will encourage people to set up many biogas plants. Enterprising banks should in the same manner finance the setting up of solar panels in urban as well as rural areas to overcome our desperate shortage of electricity.

**S.A. Mansoor**  
*Dhaka*

### Uncontrolled BCL

All the achievements of the Awami League government are being overshadowed by its burden student's front-Chhatra League. Day by day it seems to us that the AL has no control over its student body. We do not want to see this any more. When the BNP was in power or Sheikh Hasina was in jail, what did BCL do for the party? Nothing.

The AL will pay heavily if it fails to control its student wing.

**Abbas Uddin Molla**  
*Hasina Monjil, College Avenue, Barisal*

### BNP chairperson

BNP Chairperson Begum Zia was the country's prime minister twice and now she is leader of the opposition in parliament.

To come out clean to the supporters, she should opt "plead not guilty and prove not guilty" in the court which will restore her image that she has lost in recent days.

**Shafiqul Islam, NY**

### Whither education?

An educational institution is the place where students come for study and research activities. But what do they learn today from our educational institutions?

The country lost a brilliant student at DU recently. The educational institution couldn't give him security. The political parties should address the issue.

**Md. Mahi Uddin**  
*Department of Business Administration Shahjalal University of Science & Technology Sylhet*

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A university is the highest seat of learning and Dhaka University is the most famous and renowned university in our country. But, nowadays, with great regret we observe that this highest seat of education has turned into a killing ground. Our parents send us to university to ensure a better life for us. But their dreams never come true.

Things must improve in this area.

**Akash Mahmood**  
*Dept. of English University of Chittagong*

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Every educational institution in our country is passing through a crucial time due to the activities of the Bangladesh Chhatra League. A DU student was killed under most unfortunate circumstances recently. Now, everybody is asking for fair investigation and exemplary punishment to the killers, but alas, the boy will never return!

It is a huge blow to his impoverished family. Their only hope has been shattered.

**Raju Kumar Das**  
*Dept. of Business Administration SUST, Sylhet*

### Politics and lies!

Was Channel-I showing any trailer of a science fiction? There was a big hue and cry about the presence of Indian Security Personnel in Dhaka. Then everything stopped with the minister concerned denying it.

Readers, I still remember "The Father" famed American late actor John Napier Adams then residing in a house "Tripty Niloy" in Gulshan. He happened to be a personal friend of mine. During a conversation with him in his house, he once told me that politicians and lawyers are the same; the difference is that the politicians are bigger liars. My humble apologies to the readers, it is not my observation.

During the past years, since his departure from this world, I have found his saying to be a universal truth with the exception of a few.

It appears that the more one can lie, the more successful one becomes in politics. Honesty is no longer the best policy, rather dishonesty is the best policy. Children learn from their parents and people learn from their leaders. Nothing good can be expected of a nation whose leaders rely on falsehood for their own good!

**Saleh Mohammad Ayub**  
*Kalabagan, Dhaka*

### Home minister's assertion

At the backdrop of growing unrest and mayhem in the major educational institutions, our home minister says that the incident of Dhaka University was a stray one. Playing down the incident, she went so far as to say that this kind of incident happens. I think such an insensitive and partisan home minister has no right to stay in office any longer. Having banished all other parties from the scene, the BCL now fights among its own factions and our law enforcing agencies are continuing to give the ruling party a wide berth and in most cases acting like party activists.

Still we do not find the situation abnormal! As a nation we are now fragmented to thousand pieces. Internecine fighting is sapping our lifeblood. We are getting weaker and weaker. Let alone being assertive, we are now ready to compromise our national interest just to cling to power. Our poverty reduction index is dipping. The procession of the poor is ever increasing. People have already abandoned the hope of the AL changing the situation for the better. What they are now apprehensive about is our freedom and sovereignty.

**Tinku**  
*On e-mail*

### Simply unacceptable

The print media on 4 February and the electronic media the day before had two lead news items which nobody wanted to see. One was concerning the tragic death of a kid under the wheels of a reckless bus and the other one was of the death of an innocent Dhaka University student falling victim to student politics.

Death is obvious in one's life. But when it comes unnaturally it is really hard to accept. The aforesaid deaths are not new in our daily life. People dying of road mishaps and violence are common incidents. However, when we have to observe that a kid or the only prospective bread earner of a poor family has been taken away by the consequences resulting from the mischievous acts of some unscrupulous people, whom should we blame?

Terrorist activities in the name of student politics can easily be stopped by our political parties. Similarly, issuance of fake licences and road permits to unfit vehicles can easily be controlled by the authorities. There is no stringent law in the country to punish those killers. Can't the present government with overwhelming majority amend the existing Act with capital punishment? As far as the death of the kid is concerned, the transport agency owning the killer bus is threatening the victim's family to withdraw the case or to face dire consequences! Where has humanity gone nowadays! How can a human support a killer who took away the life of an angel?

We do not want to see such news over the coming days. Our life is full of stress, anxiety and tension. These incidents reveal the degrading status of norms and values of time. Can't we prevent the recurrence of such tragedies?

**Moimul Alam**  
*Dhanmondi, Dhaka*

### A freedom fighter's passing

Dr. Toufique Chowdhury (54 years old) passed away on Saturday at 1:00am, February 6, 2010 at USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Centre in Los Angeles. He suffered from an acute case of cancer of the esophagus (stomach) for about a year. Toufique was a brave freedom fighter at an early age.

He received his PhD in Chemistry (Pharmacology) in Paris, France. He was a consultant for Neutrogena and several other multi-national drug companies. His research led to the development of several perfume formulae. He wrote two research books on the socio-political situation in Bangladesh. He is survived by his mother, wife, a 14-year old daughter, and brothers, sisters, nephews, and nieces.

**Ishtiaq A Chisti**  
*Long Beach, US*

### The little boy

No words can express the sorrow and emptiness being felt by the parents of little Hamim who was crushed to death by an unfit vehicle driven by an unfit driver.

AL lawmaker Taran Halim's statement (6.2.2010) to wage a social movement to prevent road accidents gives us courage and hope.

As a start, I would recommend her to visit the BRTA, Mirpur and see for herself as to what goes on in the name of issuance of so-called Fitness Certificate. The only things checked are the chassis number and the engine number, there is no check of road-worthiness. It will take time to install all the machinery needed but at least they can use the available ramp to check the brakes and the under-body.

Major importers of cars like Toyota, Nissan do have the necessary equipment and technical expertise to carry out proper fitness check and should be entrusted with this technical job.

BRTA should limit its activities to administrative matters like registration of vehicles, issuance of proper driver's licence, etc.

Why doesn't DMP issue a 7-day notice to all vehicle owners to fit side- and rear-view mirrors? After 7 days, no vehicles should be allowed on the road without these simple tools fitted.

**Engr. ABM Nurul Islam**  
*Gulshan-2, Dhaka*

### All the way from Siberia!

In winter, the city witnesses the arrival of migratory birds from Siberia. The places where the guest birds gather are Pilkhana, Dhaka National Zoo, Botanical Garden, Bangabhaban compound, ceramic lake (Mirpur), Jahangirnagar University, and water bodies around the city. But the water bodies are now polluted, disturbed and unsuitable for migratory birds.

Last year, no birds were found in the Botanical Garden lake as there were not enough weeds for them. Day by day people are destroying the water bodies and making them unsuitable for birds and it is a matter of great regret that people are still unaware of the importance of migratory birds.

On the other hand, the sale of these birds is patronized by rich urban dwellers. So, we need sustainable management for the conservation of migratory birds and should take proper steps against the poachers.

**Mamun**  
*Dept. of Geography and Environmental Studies University of Chittagong*

### Student politics?

Ours is the land of historic Language Movement and we successfully achieved our rights to freely speak in our own mother tongue. Ours is a land of struggles as we won our independence at an immense cost. Historically, most of the people of this nation are not educated or properly educated. Some have just acquired degrees without learning anything about patriotism or the sense of responsibility. In all the cases, students were at the forefront of all struggles. They protested

against injustice in any form.

This is something we are very proud of. Not only in Bangladesh, but in almost all the countries of the world, especially in the third world countries, it is the students who are the conscience of the nation.

Now what is student politics? Is there any country in the world where the practice known as student politics exists? Whose interest does it serve? Who are benefited by it? Who is being the ultimate loser? The beneficiaries are certainly our rogue leaders who are in power. The losers are the students and the country itself.

My point is, please do not mix student movements with student politics. A movement does not require gaining experience through violence as student politics does.

**Sarwar Uddin**  
*Zahurul Haque Hall University of Dhaka*

### Online admission

The national university authorities have taken an appropriate decision about first year honours admission in 2009-2010. For the first time NU initiated online admission for Dhaka College and Suhrawardy College, Dhaka. It is high time for the government to run online system in this regard. Through this process, the government can proceed according to its plan of making a Digital Bangladesh.

The government is also going to run online tendering system in construction works and purchasing materials for government institutions to ensure transparency and accountability.

We appreciate such kind of steps by the present government.

**Fatma Sharmin Shawn**  
*Gachatala gat, Bhairab*

# Brickfields

The brickfield brings easy money. But it generally degrades the environment and human health.

Brickfields emit toxic gases that spread into the air and pollute the environment. Brickfields emit CO, CO2, F and other toxic gases.

The law stipulates that the height of the chimney of a brickfield has to be at least 100 ft. Besides, filter scrubbers have to be attached to chimney. But we have not found a single brickfield following the rules.

The law has to be enforced strictly to reduce pollution caused by brickfields.

**Nayon Saha**  
*Department of Agriculture Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University, Dinajpur*



PHOTO BY: AZIZUR RAHIM PEU / DRINKNEWS

# Beggars

A picture published in The Daily Star dated 03-02-10 of street beggars has drawn my attention. It is stated that the Tejgaon zone of Dhaka Metropolitan police launched a weeklong drive against street beggars in a bid to reduce petty crimes and relieve city dwellers of horrific pestering by beggars. On the first day, police picked up over 100 beggars. But as the government shelters cannot accommodate them, they were freed on the outskirts of the capital and the drive ended. Is it believable that the government cannot make accommodation for beggars while going for huge expenditures like buying duty free luxury cars for lawmakers?



PHOTO BY: BBC/COUK

Then, what is the use of such drive costing time and money? It is a pity that 40% of our population are below poverty level, while 20% ultra poor are being denied the basic human needs. The beggars being the valued voters as well as citizens of the country should not in general be blamed for petty crimes. There is no denying that beggars have been created by injustice, deprivation, oppression and suppression. The government programmes are found lavish in nature and a section of people maintain extravagant life while beggars suffer through a precarious existence. What a contrast! Our

country is poor but all the people are not poor!

As a nation we are poor, but rich in misuse and wastage which has become part of our culture. Our culture and habits have also contributed to creation of beggars. Like the anti-corruption department we need to create anti-misuse department to bring misuse to its minimum level and thus help reduce poverty. The beggars need to be rehabilitated and provided with jobs and other basic needs of human life.

**Md. Delwar Hossain**  
*East Rampura, Dhaka*

Dhaka College and Suhrawardy College will stop Chhatra League's interference? (DS: 6th February, 2010). It was revealed from the poll that more than half the participants believe that it would not.

Though the admission system has been made 'digital', still people believe that interference has many ugly faces.

**Ahmed Munir**  
*Purana Paltan Dhaka*

### Admission

Methinks that the online poll of The Daily Star has little impact on the general public. Because it's an English daily which is mostly read by the educated people and only a negligible number of them take part in this sort of online poll. Yet, it mirrors the minds of the cautious people.

The last poll had a question: 'Do you think online admission process for