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Population control scheme



ernment to nurture too big a population! The advertisement attracted my attention because I myself had noticed widely different ideas in the minds of rural people. As for example, religious people say, "I can get more prayer from many children for me, after death"; "More children can earn more for the family" etc.

The government has taken praiseworthy steps to develop "Health & Family Planning Services infrastructure" throughout the country; but utilization of Family Planning Service entirely depends on the motivation of people for whom those are targeted. Therefore, motivation should be done through proper media! Moreover, other measures taken for "two or one child" should also be circulated.

Dr Lailun Nahar
One-mail

Dissemination of the message, noted as "Duti santaner besi noi, ekti bhalo hoi" published in The Daily Star is weakly appraising (source: The Daily Star, 12-03-2010)! The Directorate of Family Planning should take into account the factors like "what class & percentage of

citizen subscribe newspapers", "what percentage is literate requiring motivation by writing", and "who in fact are over burdening our nation"! Considering the noted facts, we should disseminate the message through our audio-visual media; not through an English newspaper!

The responsible authorities should use all Public & Private TV Channels and Cinema Halls to knock the mind of illiterate, ignorant citizens living in all corners of the country! Each TV channel can propagate the problems with different aspects faced by our gov-

Power failures

Load shedding is now part and parcel of our life in Bangladesh. I think load shedding will increase further in the coming summer. There is no fixed time for load shedding. That is creating serious problems for people.

The electricity suppliers should let people know when it will go off so that the consumers can remain prepared for it.

Shamim Jafar
BAHS, Adabor
Shyamoli, Dhaka

Social services

All is not well with the delivery of social services in Bangladesh. There have been reports of poor performance, corruption and inefficiency in the education, health, housing and population sectors. Red tape is said to be a factor in the failure of government sectors to utilise funds allocated to them. The poor state of sanitation and water supply and the weak social safety net testify to the state's inability to provide people basic facilities and services.

Unfortunately, over the years people have increasingly been left to fend for themselves to meet their needs for education, healthcare and so on.

We are sympathetic to the constraints of the state: it does not have adequate resources, it does not have the most qualified manpower, political instability is a constant factor that makes long-term policymaking and implementation problematic. But the very point of a government is to try and improve things. Presently, the government has achieved

some success in stabilising the finances of the state, but the policy side elsewhere looks very weak. The problems associated with delivering basic services to the people are not all about lack of financial resources. For years, bottlenecks at the institutional level have meant that funds have not been utilised even where made available. Pouring more funds into a broken system with little direction and sense of purpose means that as nation we will continue to stumble along indefinitely unless our elected officials show some resolve outside isolated pockets.

Gopal Sengupta
McGill University
Montreal, Canada

Pertinent points

Our Hon. PM does not see any problems in the country and mentioned that her success rate in the 1st year is more than expected. That's why the AL is so happy that they don't see any topic to discuss in parliament. All they would love to discuss is name change and fighting with the BNP. Other 300+ MPs are responsible too. None of them could ever bring up some positive and really important issues like gas, water, electricity, murder, rape, acid violence, corruption etc etc. Why doesn't the govt just take a newspaper and start solving the problems that are mentioned in all newspapers every day. For example, these were the headings in a Bangla newspaper a few days ago.

-Potato farmer died of heart attack being afraid not to be able to get a cold storage.

Why is the Agriculture minister not rushing to that area?

-Eden students leaving the hostel.

Why we still cannot ban student politics.

-Businessman shot dead in Sutrapur.

Everyday people are being killed.

I don't want to talk about the BNP because I think this party is far worse. I know some AL supporters will read this letter and will be happy to see that they are better than the BNP.

May God bless these funny people and save our nation.
A Bangladeshi
One-mail

A wise decision

Very recently it was decided that a person below 18 years of age won't be given any SIM card. It is undoubtedly a wise decision. I agree that mobile companies had taken many positive initiatives which brought several changes in our social as well as economic life. In our country, many parents are hard-pressed to fulfil the demand of their teenaged sons and daughters. The teenagers are not mature enough to understand the economic condition of their parents. At the same time, it is very difficult to control the emotion of the teenagers. Due to the influence of dish culture, they often try to copy the alien culture. They unnecessarily talk hour after hour through mobile which is also a kind of fashion for them.

Moreover, some naughty boys are bold enough to threaten others with the help of the

mobile phone. Parents not only become irritated but also worried about the activities of their children. People of this country are not rich enough to spend money for talking unnecessarily. It would be great if the same restriction is imposed upon the Facebook users too.

We should always remember that both mobile and Internet are very strong modes of communication and we should use them judiciously.
Pradip Das
Lecturer
BHPi, CRP

Border killings

Bangladesh and India are two friendly countries and that should remain so for the sake of both the countries since therein lies the well being of both the neighbours. It is very unfortunate that people should die from firing by border forces of either of the countries for any reason whatsoever. Generally, it is the Indian BSF that is reported to kill alleged smugglers, though Bangladesh asserts that those killed are innocent villagers from the bordering territories of Bangladesh. India should look into the matter more seriously and in no way strengthen the hands of anti Indian forces within Bangladesh by allowing these unnecessary killings.

If for the sake of argument, we accept that Indian forces, in fact, kill trespassers that are smugglers, we should examine what India gains from these killings. Nothing, rather it embarrasses a friendly government and a huge number of friendly people of Bangladesh. If smugglers trespass from Bangladesh, so naturally smugglers trespass into Bangladesh too. However, seldom have we heard of BDR killing Indians. It has been an itching point in the good neighbourly relationship for long. This must stop and as the mightier country the responsibility falls more on India than Bangladesh. Does the BSF show any conclusive evidence that they are not killing innocent people who happen to cross borders for various reasons? It should not be forgotten that the artificial border that were drawn at the time of partition of India left numerous houses divided between the two regions and in many cases people even find the nearest bazaars in the other country. Sometimes their agricultural land falls in the other country. Grazing cattle crosses the border into the other country and this is very natural. And then killing a few smugglers, if smugglers are killed, why strain a good relationship? Measures should be taken to stop smuggling but not by killings.

I remember, once while on a field tour, I went to check the work of fieldworkers who were supposed to paste posters during a mass awareness

campaign to raise the status of green leafy vegetables. I found a whole village pasted with the campaign posters in India. Thankfully, we did not face any BSF then. Workers from outside the area did not realize that they were in India. Later, the civil surgeon and his staff alerted us to the fact. I immediately instructed the campaign staff to take along local staffs while campaigning in a border area. Since we claim to be friendly countries, there cannot be any need of guns and any dispute can be settled through negotiations; otherwise, where is the benefit of being friendly?

Mir Mahboob Ali

Former: Senior Executive, The Bangladesh Observer
Coordination Manager, Helen Keller International
Currently: Fiction Writer and Freelance Consultant

Traffic issue

This refers to Mr. Rahat's letter published on your daily on 15 March 2010 with the headline: Take rickshaws off. To be quite honest, I agree with most of his points. He elaborately discussed how to minimize the traffic jams in Dhaka city. However, I believe that he was a bit rude towards the rickshaw-pullers. In his 11th point he stated as I quote: "The immediate step: Take rickshaws off the main roads. Do it now." I believe he was a bit carried away with his feelings. Taking rickshaws off is not the main thing. I think we always divert from the main issues. It is the large number of people in Dhaka city who are the real culprits. Population of the capital should be reduced and for doing this, our government should take initiatives for forming a decentralized government. As long as Dhaka is centralized, population will keep on growing. Rickshaws were there on Dhaka roads from the beginning. There was hardly any traffic jam even 10 years ago. And now, even in Uttara, it takes 30 minutes to go to Jasimuddin Road from Sector 9.

Rather than taking rickshaws off from roads, we should think BIG to minimize the traffic problem once and for all.

Minhaj Ahmed
Uttara, Dhaka

No ATM facility

I am writing this letter to draw the attention of the banks and relevant institutions. We are visiting the district of Gopalganj for some survey works under the banner of i-Bangla™. There are some banks operating in this area and it is so disappointing that the leading banks do not provide any ATM facility. It would not be inappropriate to mention that people from all walks of life are coming here for jobs and business transactions. It is always wise and secure to carry a plastic card, instead of carrying cash for regular expenses.

It would be highly appreciated if any of the top banks of our country provides ATM facility in this region.

Syed
On behalf of i-Bangla™

Why don't they learn?

I don't understand why Bangladeshi cricketers don't learn from their mistakes!! A student who is known as a good student is always persistent in learning from their mistakes. Repeating mistakes is not a sign of talent. Please stop saying that Bangladeshi players are talented. Look at Kevin Pietersen, he practised more and more against lefty spinners at the net and then got the result when he made 99 against Bangladesh in Chittagong. That is how you can do justice to your talent! You have to have the eagerness to learn. Murali is a great bowler. Now what could he be without his "DUSRA". First time he saw it from Saqlain Mushtaq and then he learned it thoroughly. That is called eagerness!
Rashat Rahman
One-mail

Cricketers perform poorly

I am writing this mail out of frustration and anguish about our beloved national cricket team who conceded defeat in the first Test in Chittagong against England.

On the 5th day, we could have at least dreamt of having a draw against England looking at how the match advanced. England drew 2 Test matches in the recent tour to South Africa by means of huge commitment, respect to their profession, nation as well as the cricket world. I must thank Mushfiq and Junaid for their commitment to bring the match to the 5th day at least. As one of the millions of supporters, I can very well comment on a few points. The coach and the team management could have told the players to stay on the field, to bring a draw rather to bat aggressively to win the match which was almost impossible.

Two, shortage of fast bowlers was well evident during the match. Murtaza declined to play for the Test on the ground of his mother's sickness. Ironically, he has gone to India to play for IPL soon after the selection for the Test!! Three, the in-form player Raquibul was selected for the Test but announced to go on retirement. Echoing to the feeling of thousands, I would like to ask the BCB to take stern action against these two players by imposing a permanent ban on them. Last but not the least, I felt the absence of an experienced cricketer like Ashrafal on the ground.

Dr. Maj. Abdul Mannan (Retd)
Consultant, Orthopaedic Surgeon
Aysha Memorial Hospital
Mohakhali, Dhaka



PHOTO: AFP

Flyover at Tongi

Construction work of the flyover at Tongi railway crossing on the Tongi-Kaliganj-Ghorasal-Panchdona highway began in the middle of 2006. The Tongi flyover project was taken to ease the traffic movement on both sides of the Tongi junction enabling the vehicles coming to and from northern and north-western districts to cross the station uninterrupted, the RHD has been implementing the project.

The flyover has been under construction for about four years. Delayed completion of it now poses a great risk to the road users and pedestrians. Who knows when the construction of the flyover will be complete to the great relief of commuters, pedestrians and vehicle users? Work progress on the flyover is going at a snail's speed but the authorities do not bother about the situation. It is one of the busiest outlets from northern part of the mega city Dhaka towards Narshingdi, Bhairab, Ashuganj, Bramanbaria, Comilla, Habiganj, Maulvibazr and Sylhet. Every day thousands of transports ply this road towards different destinations.

Road communication from Tongi level crossing to BSCIC industrial area almost came to a standstill because of its deplorable condition. Anybody using the road with his vehicle for the first time will think twice before venturing for the second trip along the road for safety of his valuable transport.

Serious traffic gridlock is a regular phenomenon in this damaged road under the flyover. Incidents of breakdown of transports on the potholes of the road is also a regular occurrence. Instead of reducing public sufferings with the construction of the flyover, inordinate delay in completion of the same adds to their sufferings.

Opening of the flyover over the Tongi railway station, scheduled for December last year, has now become uncertain following a sudden rise in project costs at the fag end of its construction work.

The Roads & Highways authorities along with the Ministry of Communications and other concerned are requested to look into the matter seriously and complete the work at the earliest.
Niaz A. Chowdhury
Uttara Model Town
Dhaka

Student politics, then and now

We have a glorious history of student politics. From the language movement in 1952 to the movement of dethroning the autocratic government in 1990, our students played a crucial role in national politics

and proved their worth. Now, in national politics, we have many political leaders who once played vital roles when they were students. We cannot but acknowledge their contribution to national politics. But, unfortunately, what we now experience from our student folk regarding politics is really shocking and ironic. Nowadays, our students concentrate more on politics, an easy shortcut, to them, to being healthy and wealthy, rather than their first and foremost duty-- study. So the result is predictable and in most cases it is found accurate. Now our students seem to be student-cum-businessman.

Now our students have no thinking power of their own. They only work as their godfathers guide them. In the past the students would dominate politics but now they are being dominated by politics and are working as the puppets in the hands of political leaders. Our political leaders seem to be indifferent to the fact, lest they should become powerless without the students. They should give up this evil mentality and work for a positive change of society, not their own future, and at the same time our students should also go by their conscience.

It is high time our government took necessary steps to bring a positive change in student politics for the greater welfare of the country.
Ramij Ahmad
Department of English
University of Chittagong

Roof-top power generation

Traditionally, when we talk of wind power generation; we automatically think in terms of wind farms. Here a large number of very tall wind turbines convert natural breeze to wind power, connected to the electricity supply grid. Now small rooftop wind turbines have been developed and is available from Europe or USA.

These wind turbines can be installed on the roof-tops of independent residences, or multi-storied flats; which are today common in many urban areas of Bangladesh. It is particularly more suited for the roofs of high rises; where these small wind turbines can be installed coupled to traditional battery back-up and inverter to provide household power at normal supply voltage.

This is a cost-effective and pollution free power source. Though the capital cost per installed KW of power is high, the operating cost is zero; as no traditional fuel is needed. A combination of wind turbine and high yield voltaic panel, is an ideal solution of independent power source for residences, offices, public buildings, hospitals, educational institutions and shopping centres, usually located in high rise buildings; over three or four

floor high. It may also be an option to incorporate voltaic panel glass panes now available in California, USA. These can replace all our glass window and other decorative panels; and provide us with a free source of power to boot! Given the tremendous power and gas shortage that we are facing daily, and the situation going from bad to worse, day by day, we have no choice but to go for this fuel free alternative source of power supply. Gestation period for these projects is also reasonable. It may take from ten to twelve months from the time orders are placed to power at the finger tips! There is also no government funds involved!

The set-up can be a part of building the high rise; and the cost can be shared by all the co-owners. However, to make this venture effective and attractive; the government has an important motivating role to play. In the overall national interest of overcoming power and natural gas shortage; this cannot be ignored as it is a viable and pragmatic technical solution that can be easily utilised and taken advantage of!

Firstly, all wind and solar power installations including the storage batteries, inverters and necessary accessories must be allowed to be imported, on duty free basis, without any VAT or other taxes imposed. Also financing at very liberal rates must be allowed for implementing these projects, as it will save the country both power and natural gas and the imported fuel needed for power generation! This will encourage the people to go for it in most urban areas of Bangladesh, now totally dependent on PDB and REB for all its power requirements.

To illustrate its possibilities, let us assume that we install the wind and voltaic combination in say twenty lakh buildings in the country. Each installation should generate at least 300 watt; though even 400 to 500 watt can also be possible, depending on roof size and height of the building. On this basis we should be easily capable of generating 600MW of power, a virtual power plant!

In a sense, we are installing a 600MW power plant, at no cost to the exchequer and with no imported fuel needed to run it! Should not such an attractive option be grabbed with both hands by the government?
Engr. S.A. Mansoor
Technical Adviser
Spectra Group

Erratum

The writer of the letter, "Rich poor gap" S.A. Samad is a former general manager of Janata Bank. He is not associated with the bank at present as erroneously mentioned in his letter on March 21, 2010.

Crisis season



The crisis season has started. Water, gas and electricity problems are disturbingly acute. Load shedding and water with bad smell have become part of our daily life!

Water borne diseases are spreading rapidly. Last week ICDDR,B had to treat a huge number of diarrhoea patients. We need more water treatment plants in Dhaka city to ensure availability of pure water.

In spite of electricity crisis, people are lighting their residence on marriage

ceremonies, using loud speakers! We need to be civilised while using the non-renewable resources. The government should ban all types of lighting. That can save electricity.

We, the citizens, should make efforts not only to prevent misuse of electricity but also to consume less.

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