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Small investors

For many reasons, the general people of Bangladesh, especially after the so called 1/11, are not interested to invest their money in any production or transaction ventures. Thousands of hazards are associated with such type of investment decisions. So, people consider 'investment in stock market' as a better option. More than 22 lakh investors are trading, more or less, regularly. But the number of good quality shares is very limited. So, very often the prices of the shares are increasing beyond the rationale level.

New entrants believe that a trader can gain a huge amount of money by investing here within a very short time. For this, a good number of people are opening their BO accounts daily. The

question simply arises, are they doing the job with proper understanding? In most cases the answer is 'no'.

We can recall the situation of the stock market in 1996. The booming condition pulled the housewives or even the rickshaw pullers into this business. Very soon their dreams were shattered. The market size is now far wider than fourteen years back. We hear, experts always pronounce, some gamblers are controlling the market.

This is one aspect of the story that must not be overlooked by the decision makers and the investors.

Md. Abdul Hamid
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Dept. of Business Administration
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Water logging

Water logging has emerged as the major environmental problem in the metropolitan cities of Dhaka and Chittagong due to unplanned urbanization and filling up of low lying land, lakes, river banks. Closure of Dholai khal, Begun Bari khal in Dhaka and Chaktai Khal in Chittagong which used to serve as major outlets for rainwater and drainage system have created major logging problems in these cities. It is a basic tenet of city planning to preserve open spaces, and protect lakes, wetland areas and canal encroachment in order to maintain natural and environmental characteristics of the city. But the powerful land grabbers and real estate developers taking advantage of the housing boom illegally filled up natural wetland, retention ponds, lakes and main canals for construction of buildings and housing estates. RAJUK or CDA or Department of Environment have failed to preserve the topographical features and protect the cities from the uncontrolled rainwater flooding. Rain is inevitable in monsoon-fed Bangladesh but now an hour of heavy rain creates temporary flooding and long periods of water logging in the low lying suburban areas. Expansion of metropolitan cities are a part of inevitable process of economic growth but urban expansion is occurring without any control, supervision or future plan due to the incompetence, corruption and indifference of the city development authorities and the city corporation. The government must take up a comprehensive plan to improve the drainage system, reclaim and recover the flow of blocked and close major 'khals' and protect the wetlands and retention ponds to save our citizens from water logging.

Md. Tanjil
Dept. of Geography and
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University of Chittagong

City's population

I concur with Mr. Shahnur Wahid's article that proactive measures must be taken to prevent big disasters in Dhaka city. The growth of population in Dhaka city is alarming and we must do something about it. I cannot imagine what Dhaka city would look like in 2030 when the population will be more than two crores. Our government must think of taking big steps to shift major sectors to the outskirts of Dhaka city.

Fixing Dhaka city is a daunting task. It requires bold and decisive action, as well as strategic planning. Hopefully, we will get there!

Dr. Saiful Khandaker
One e-mail

To the police commissioner...

I would like to begin by thanking and congratulating you and the Dhaka Metropolitan Police for your help in ensuring that the area in front of our homes was not overwhelmed by eateries and music on Pahela Baishakh. The police did a commendable job of confining the music to areas adjoining Mirpur Road.

However, a front page report of The Daily Star is alarming: The BCL earned lakhs off noisy concerts on the Dhaka University campus and other areas on Pahela Baishakh. Apparently, this was not enough because, on the 15th and the 16th the concerts continued in Dhanmondi. Today, the 17th of April, the drums and music have been on again - since 10:00am - as our creative giants rehearse! It is now close to 11:00am and it is difficult to describe the cacophonous effect of the sounds of drums and beats that invade, and override, the normal pulses of the body and normal rhythms of the mind that help sustain human life. This invasion even includes moments of prayer and reflection.

I called the OC repeatedly to complain and was told, last evening, that the BCL had been given permission by the DMP itself to hold the concerts and that he was helpless.

As such, I, on behalf of others in Dhanmondi -- many too afraid to speak up -- would earnestly like to request you to take the steps needed to put an end to the madness. If you need help from civil society, we are here.

Sultana Alam, Ph.D.
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Arabic language

Arabic is the language of the Holy Quran. We say prayers, recite the Holy Quran in Arabic. Friday's khutba (sermon) is recited in Arabic. But most of us do not know the meaning of Arabic scripture.

To understand the meaning of Arabic language, it should be taught at all educational institutes.

Md. Arifur Rahman
Sr. Officer
Alltex Industries Ltd.

Power supply

We are assured that many things will be done for interrupted power supply, but we could not see any initiative being taken to achieve that goal. The situation is getting complicated.

We demand smooth power supply so that we can pass time peacefully during the summer.

Sohal
Dasadi SIS Degree Madrasha
Chandpur

Child abuse

The recent newspaper report that a two year old girl was raped shows how vulnerable our children are. Almost all the children are abused this way or that way. In most cases children are sexually fondled and in extreme cases the fondling crosses the limit and cause a permanent mental and physical damage to the child. The sexually abused children carry with them the hang-ups of the bitter experience which sometimes mentally retard them. And as the abusers are usually the near relatives, it causes a debilitating damage to the normal relationship. The abuser and the abused can never behave normally throughout life.

To save us from this dire situation, I think the parents have a crucial role to play.

Abdus Subhan
Lalpur, Natore

War crimes and Pakistan

Thanks to DS for publishing the press briefing of Pakistani ambassador on the trial of war criminals. Three significant issues the ambassador has referred to call for some analysis. These are "internal affairs of Bangladesh; people's sovereignty of Bangladesh and the most important one is, "formal statement" might come if needed in due course, I presume.

I think the Bangladesh government should not take it for granted that Pakistan will consider the trial as an internal affair of Bangladesh unless a formal statement to that effect is issued by the Pakistani government. There is no way Bangladesh should be satisfied with his (ambassador) formal and informal

diplomacy. In my judgment the gap is still there. The press briefing is just an attempt to respond to the present public perception about Pakistani opposition to go for the trial of war criminals; also an attempt to maintain their stake in the trial, which might keep the anti-trial group in Bangladesh active.

I wish our politicians will stop making reckless statements and the media will be careful in questioning the trial process. Only positive suggestions to strengthen the trial process are welcome.

Faqrul Quadir
California, USA

Disabled

Now a disabled can also contribute to the socio-economic development. For ensuring this, a country needs to create the favourable environment. If we analyse the contribution of some disabled like Stephen Hawking, Edison, Homer, Milton, and Helen Keller, we may realise what they are capable of doing. Can we ignore their revolutionary contribution to the human well-being?

If we look at the developed countries, almost 50% of the disabled people are engaged in employment almost in every sector. We should learn from those countries and create the necessary facilities for the disabled.

Md. Nazrul Islam
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University of Dhaka

Victims of eve teasing

Nowadays, it's too hard to get any newspaper which is not carrying the news of young girls committing suicide. The DS on 04th, 2010 published the news of a schoolgirl, Elora, who embraced death because of unremitting teasing by local youths. Not only she, but also a number of young school girls are voluntarily embracing death in order to escape teasing. Because of socio-cultural frailties women are not treated gently.

Women have the right to live freely in the world. Independence is their birth right. They have the right to lead their lives as males. On the other hand, the family and society of the victims or teased girls should have the courage and resolve to support them. Most often, they are misunderstood by their family whenever they inform the family members about teasing. The family and society should support them mentally.

To sum up, I would like to request the authorities concerned to look into this matter.

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

Taxpayers' money

I am shocked and dismayed to hear people calling it the government's money. Are people living in a fool's paradise? Or are they ignorant? It is not government's money, it is taxpayers' money. What is government? It is a body of elected representatives of the people. Like any other person the elected representatives who constitute the government also require to fulfill their needs. For fulfilling their requirements they cash on the taxpayers' money, which is wrongly termed as government money since colonial times. This has to change in

order to make the government accountable for their deeds to the people.

This should be included in the curriculum at all the training academies like BMA, Civil Service Training Academy, Police Training Academy etc where people undergo training in order to serve the nation. Only with the correct information and proper training, the government servants shall know exactly whom to serve. They should always bear in mind that it is the taxpayers' money that goes for their upkeep and it is them that they should serve and protect. In the backdrop of the present day situation, it can fairly be said that it is a profession like any other profession for those who constitute the government. They also live and thrive on the taxpayers' money. For Heaven's sake, learn the correct thing, it is not government's money, it is taxpayers' money.

Saleh Mohammad Ayub
Kalabagan, Dhaka

Fake 'pir'

Following a pictorial report published in the Prothom Alo, the leading Bangla newspaper, on April 12 last, police arrested a fake 'pir' named Amzad Hossain Bepari on charge of torturing several children and women in the name of treatment in Khasnagar village under Sirajdikhan upazila of Munshiganj.

According to SP Md Shafiqul Islam, Amzad is illiterate. He knows only two suras (verses of the Holy Quran) and also makes mistakes while reciting those.

Regrettably, some vile elements are misinterpreting the Holy Quran and Hadith to attain their goals. They have long been deceiving people in various ways.

Habibur Rashid Ismail
Jamea Rahmania Madrasa
Chittagong

Living without water!

There is no water supply from the beginning of the month in our locality. People are living in North Badda, Satarkul road, Dhaka without water in an egregious state. The water supply interruption began from the middle of March but rest of the previous month it was within a tolerable limit with regular perturbation.

The line direction altered during the renovation work, and since then water is not flowing, leaving a community of around ten thousand people without its supply. The authorities are not taking the necessary steps to resolve the problem, as the plight of the people is escalating.

So, my earnest request to Wasa: please take proper steps to put an end to people's sufferings

Md. Mahbulul Islam
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Engineering and Technology
(BUET)

Flash flood and haors

Flash flood occurs during the pre-monsoon (March may) in north-eastern part of Bangladesh. Heavy rainfall in the upstream or neighbouring upland countries causes flash flood. This sudden flood damages our crops by submerging the agricultural lands.

Polish president's death

We mourn the death of Polish president Lech Kaczynski in a plane crash that took place on Sat, Apr. 10, 2010 in western Russia. Not only Polish people but also people of the whole world expressed the deepest shock at this great loss.

We pray for the eternal peace of the departed souls.

M Faisal Saleh
A student, Amirabad
Lohagara, Chittagong



Now, this is the duty of our weather forecasting department to forecast it correctly for the poor farmers. But due to unavailability of data from Indian centre, they cannot do so. Whenever it begins to rain in Indian upland, they should inform us and we should tell our farmers to be prepared. It's a simple task to improve the data transferring system. This doesn't need structural back-up, only a computerized strong data base, which will contain rainfall data for flood forecasting, is needed. The government can save the agricultural products of haors through proper negotiation with Indian authorities to share rainfall data.

The step should be taken immediately for the well being of our people and their food safety.

Mehruha Islam
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Bengali New Year

Happy Bengali New Year 1417! With a new hope and a fresh promise yet another new year has come. Let's bury our odd thoughts to facilitate germination of the new ones with a view to making our life and living more meaningful, peaceful, and joyous. Let's forget our narrowness and broaden our minds to serve the greater interests in favour of our well-being and prosperity. In this digital age, the world has become a global family where we share each-other's joys and sorrows and respect our respective culture. I am touched to go through the message delivered by the US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton on the occasion of the Bengali New Year which confirms the values of global socialization. I would like to reproduce part of the text of the message below:

"On behalf of President Barack Obama and the American people, I congratulate all Bengalis as you celebrate Pahela Baishakh and welcome a new year of promise and possibility."

I send my warmest greetings to all those who celebrated this special day.

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

Ship breaking industry

I am intrigued by the similarity between what is going on at the moment between the government and the ship-breaking industry - and a particular point in British history.

A few months ago, I attended a lecture that told listeners of the appalling facts of the ship-breaking industry

and that it was in the hands of around 20 very rich and powerful individuals who had, so far, successfully resisted all attempts to reform it.

In 2007, the UK celebrated the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade. (Slavery itself was abolished throughout the British Empire later.) It had brought huge wealth into Britain, especially the ports of London, Liverpool and Bristol. The very idea of abolishing it seemed absurd. Indeed, the Prime Minister, William Pitt, said to William Wilberforce, the major Parliamentarian in the fight, "It is a great idea, William, but you can't do it because it would split the Tory (later, the Conservative) Party!"

But the campaigners did it. In fact, they invented some of the techniques of campaigning that others were to copy later. They built up an enormous, nation-wide, educational programme, teaching rich and poor alike the ghastly facts of the trade - and significant people joined them. Josiah Wedgwood, in the Potteries, made a mug that people bought and put on their mantelpieces, with the picture of a black man in chains and, if I remember rightly, the caption was 'The slave - my brother.' Slowly the campaign destroyed the awful assumption of most white people of those days, that those with brown or black skins were not as admirably human as they were.

Slowly the nation was driven to the point at which enough people believed that, even if the slave trade was hugely profitable, it stank to heaven and had to go. Parliament abolished it in 1807.

However, the truth remains that no country wakes up one morning to discover it is a developed country! It can only be achieved by years of persistent hope, selfless sacrifice, amazing courage, dogged faith and caring love - all of which inspire people not to run away from the painful business of facing up to the evils of society and those 'politico-businessmen' who bluster and threaten as they see the power of their ill-gotten gains disappearing. It takes public support and the readiness of a large crop of carefully cultivated New People who are able to take their place and cleanse the rotten old ways of doing things and replace them with good.

(No cleansing of an industry will work if the Old Management is replaced by a New Management which is no different.) There is no short cut and the answer is a great deal more difficult and personally demanding than "Give us more money".

So, what about the

Bangladeshi ship-breaking industry about which moving, and shocking, documentaries have been made - and shown round the world? What group of people will start a project that may take more than 30 years to triumph as the early anti-slave traders did, not fearing the initial 'It's impossible!' and continuing until 'We've done it!'

Angela Robinson
Gulshan, Dhaka

Obama's Iran strategy

Now this peace loving Nobel laureate president is planning to repeat and implement the thoughts of his forbearer, aiming to attack Iran. The world has observed Obama's negotiation with Iran's sanctions with the world powers in the name of Security Council, ever largest after the World War II. People of the world appreciate non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, but do not expect another nuclear catastrophe, the one which still instills fear in everyone. America, pushed by Israel, has become impatient to start another war, bloodshed. President Obama mentioned the nuclear weapons as a threat to the world, being the largest holder of nuclear weapons and active materials for making these. He was more concerned about Iran than nuclear proliferation during the two day Security Council sessions. Iran is pursuing to develop a nuclear weapon for a long time claims the west and their allies like they claimed Iraq as the storage of WMDs!!

America has made the Middle East a place for killing the innocent people in the name of war on terror. Obama has tried his best to convince Russia and China to impose sanctions on Iran, whereas immediately after the Security Council meeting Iran has announced holding of another summit on the issue.

The US foreign policy is the same for every president!

Md. Faisal Bin Karim
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Savar, Dhaka

Teasing

Eve teasing has become a social disease in our country. We have lost many sisters due to eve teasing. We find news of suicide regularly in newspapers. A section of young boys have no work to do, and they indulge in all sorts of ugly things.

We should resist eve teasing collectively.

Rahad Ahsan
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Jhum and environment

Jhum farming is generally called slash and burn agricultural practice. It is an old and special cultivation system practiced by the indigenous people of Chittagang Hill Tracts. It is the primary source of food, shelter and clothing of local people. In this practice, mixed seeds of cotton, chilli, cowpea, cucumber, gourd, rice, melon, pumpkin, maize, yams, sweet potatoes are sown in each pocket in the hilly areas. In three hill districts of Chittagang the indigenous people traditionally grow cotton following this indigenous technology. In Jhum cultivation cotton seeds are sown along with other crop seeds like- rice, chilli, maize, peanuts in

the same pit/hill horizontally on the hill slope. The hill people harvest different crops in different times sequentially. But the practice of Jhum farming is not environment friendly. It is harmful for the biodiversity of the hilly areas of CHT.

So, the DoE, national and international NGOs should come forward to help the indigenous people adopt modern agricultural practices.

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