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Our lovely country

Recently, I watched a BBC programme called 'Tropic of Cancer'. As a part of this programme Mr Simon Reeve embarks on an epic journey around the world following the Tropic of Cancer and uncovers environmental, political and human stories from some of the most remote places on the planet. In Bangladesh, Simon sails down the mighty Padma and visits fishermen who use trained otters to drive fish into their nets. Further on, he sees the riverbanks crumbling before his eyes. Increased river erosion is thought to be caused by global climate change. And in the capital Dhaka he meets some of the millions of child workers.

I was really shocked to see the worst situation of our independent lovely country. It makes me frustrated when I see daily TV news--- as usual all the politicians are fighting with each other. They always talk all sorts of rubbish of each other, rather than having some productive discussion. The documentary showed that millions of people cannot sleep properly for fear of river banks crumbling and every day more poor people are becoming homeless. This documentary also revealed that millions of children are doing very hard jobs to survive. But our so-called politicians are busy fighting each other and trying to get power somehow.

Dear politicians, please stop fighting and look around your environment and do some work together to stop river erosion and minimise general people's sufferings. One day our whole country will disappear, including your powerful chair, which one you are fighting for?!

Sharif Ahmed
Agroni Research
London, UK



A.M AHMAD (DRIKNEWS)

Save Buriganga

We have already noticed the river Buriganga has been polluted at an alarming rate that resulted in the dreadful condition of surface water. The ecological system has been imbalanced by different kinds of man-made activities such as unplanned urbanisation on the banks of the river. Many industries and factories have been set up on the banks without showing any regard for environmental issues.

Every day thousands of tonnes of garbage is dumped into the rivers. As a result, natural flow of the rivers is lost and the colour of the water turns dark, that indicates that the percentage of pollution has reached the highest point as claimed by the environmentalists.

Now the time has come for the authorities concerned to take effective measures. It is expected that if the govt. executes the verdict of the HC properly, the situation will improve a bit.

Eng. Md. Meheub Haque
BUET

Is it a fair deal?

We have learned that Petrobangla and Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources have recently allocated 1,00,000 (one lakh) MT of condensate for two private companies.

It is not fair to allocate or sell very valuable condensates of different gas fields to private companies without any tender.

Normally, in the past such condensates available from gas fields were sold through international tender.

The matter may kindly be investigated.

Khadimul Bashar
Motijheel CIA, Dhaka

Aluminium windows

Nowadays almost all the houses of Dhaka city have Thai Aluminium windows which can be opened and closed easily. However, only fifty percent of the windows can be opened. In this way we are depriving ourselves of air. I think in a city where population density is so high and where load shedding is so frequent, use of such kind of window is not a good idea. Moreover, the distance between the houses is very little, thus this window makes things worse.

As a microbiologist, I am always for running air and not stagnant air, because running air reduces the chances of infectious diseases. We must not forget infectious diseases, especially lung infection which is one of the leading causes of death in Bangladesh.

Dr. M. Mahboob Hossain
Associate Professor
Department of Pharmacy
Northern University
Bangladesh
Dhaka

The CI and govt.

The story of a sinking ship is unfolding slowly. The CI can defend his contention politically, but his chances of gaining the status of the chief investigator as per charter of the act was remote and literally impossible. He was behaving like a typical government servant.

The government is so squarely embarrassed for taking the wrong path and wrong advice in major policy formulation and strategy.

I hope that the trial of war criminals is not slipping away from the grip of the government and controlled by the

alleged criminals and their patrons. I can see the need for people and the media to rise up and save the sinking ship, removing all obstacles including projecting the loopholes and inaction of the concerned ministries.

I am not ruling out the classic political theory of 'diverting public attention' from government's failure, when a story is designed.

Areader, USA

Flagging education

With the new academic year beginning, parents, particularly those belonging to the middle and lower middle classes, are a harassed lot. In the past, schools were run by governments and the quality of education was good. Teachers were dedicated and there was no need for private tuition. But now private schools and coaching centres are mushrooming all over the country. We find them giving huge advertisements on their pass percentage and successful candidates. Accordingly, they also demand huge fees. Another growing trend is publicity in schools that they coach students for entrance examinations right from the fifth standard. Of course, they charge a premium.

The government seems to have no control over such crass commercialisation of education in private schools. In future, quality education will become a dream for most people.

Gopal Sengupta
Canada

"Taratari"

"Taratari", a remarkable jute fibre reinforced fishing boat; modelled in the lines of our local fishing boats of Sundarbans, was developed by the NGO 'Friendship and

Bengal Foundation'. The vessel rowed by Corentin, a French engineer, set sail on 14th. February, from somewhere in Khulna. The start of this epic voyage was reported by almost all the local dailies of Bangladesh!

It is now coming on to three months, when the boat set sail; but we have no further news about its subsequent progress. The country type boat, however had a solar panel powered global positioning system installed on board, as well as a satellite phone!

I am sure, if not any one, at least the NGO 'Friendship and Bengal Foundation' has some news about this epic voyage of adventure, that originated from Bangladesh! May I request your reporting staff to find out and inform the public, about the latest report on the boat's progress, and its present position. It is an exiting event, and we have not forgotten about this voyage of adventure!

National Agriculture Policy

As far as I know the draft National Agriculture Policy prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture is now awaiting final approval of the government.

It is sincerely hoped that the policy will soon see the light of dawn as the "National Agriculture Policy 2010".

I am confident that the policy will show both farmers and other stakeholders the path to agricultural development and food security.
Professor M Zahidul Haque
Department of Agricultural Extension & Information System
SAU, Dhaka

Trial of war criminals

It is a good news for us that the government has already formed a tribunal for the trial of war criminals. I congratulate the government.

Trial of war criminal has become a public demand.
Sohel Rana
Mirpur-12, Dhaka

Only 800 arches!

On the eve of a party leader's visit to a divisional town, the leaders, supporters reportedly have built 800 arches spending lakhs of taka. The news of this important event was the major headlines of the dailies in Bangladesh.

Apart from erecting arches, the jubilant supporters have displayed huge portraits of the leader all the way from capital to the remote town located about 350 miles away from the capital. It is really very difficult to guess how much more they would spend on other heads. However, few known heads are, hiring of hundreds of buses and trucks to carry the spectators to the meeting spot to listen to her speech.

A great leader's great and generous visit!!

A great show of her popularity. We the Bangladeshis are a forgetful nation. We have forgotten her past deeds so quickly.

We are a great nation, forgetful and kind.
Shafiqul Islam, NY

Magic of belief

Why is it that some people always succeed in whatever they do and others continue to fail? How come some people drift through life trying to find the energy to go on, and others have abounding energy? Is there some magic potion that the successful have access to? The answer is yes. The magic potion is belief. The idea of the magic of believing is born out of the fact that masterpieces, world architecture, societies and cultures, discoveries, new skills, world records... man's achievements have all resulted from the quaint beginnings of a simple belief. What magnificent and incredible power, and apparent magic, stems from a clear cut belief!

The aura of magic around believing also stems from the fact that it's such an intangible asset. It seems like an invisible power... one that cannot be seen or felt on its own. Yet the progeny of it takes form, gathers momentum and culminates in the most amazing outcomes. Once set into our life, a belief creates a ripple affect spreading its influence out into our life. Those who make it big, look beyond what they can see with their eyes, to the unlimited possibilities of believing. We are limited in what we can do working with our hands.

When we make full, use of our mind, the sky is the limit.

For Bangladesh to develop, the citizens must come together to make a difference...A difference that will create magic...A difference through the power of belief...
Tanha Kashfia Kate
Uttara Model Town
Dhaka

Energy options

I'm writing in response to the cover-page articles in the latest issue of The Daily Star (30th April 2010) on energy options for us. The lead article 'The Case for Coal' explored, and, to a great extent, as I understand, suggested coal option to ensure our energy security, and the next article advocated for solar breakthrough. Well, the first thing first. The real solutions to the energy and climate crisis is well-addressed by it, and what the writer told are available today if we focus on what we have in abundance.

Emphasising efficiency and renewables, in that order, is already working in many houses, mainly in the rural areas, the solar panels erected by Grameen Shakti, Rahimafrooz, supported by Idcol and others in Bangladesh, which is demonstrating how we can change for the better by changing the way we think. Actually, there are plenty of opportunities to meet energy demand through efficiency, and it's not a wild idea, anyway.

Secondly, I wonder how we can even think that we need to fire coal for electricity. Coal is the dirtiest of all fossil fuels and has caused most of the global warming crisis to date. Coal-fired power plants remain the largest source of global warming pollution in the world, and the climate crisis cannot be addressed unless we stop burning coal.

We know renewable energy is limitless. But to put it in stark terms, it is really amazing to know that the Earth gets enough solar power every 40 minutes to meet the whole world's energy demand for a full year! Apart from that, wind power and geothermal resources are similarly capable of providing for our needs. Our buildings can become part of a distributed, renewable energy infrastructure that's not only cleaner and greener, but also more resilient than one that depends on a small number of big power plants to keep the lights on. It's a myth that solar panels are costly, and even costlier to install. Now the scenario is changing little by little, and we're now armed with researches and good practices.

Yes, there are many clean options for electricity generation, and we should engage ourselves, our knowledge and our money in that direction.

Sirajul Islam
Pisciculture Housing Society
Shyamoli, Dhaka

Make them happy!

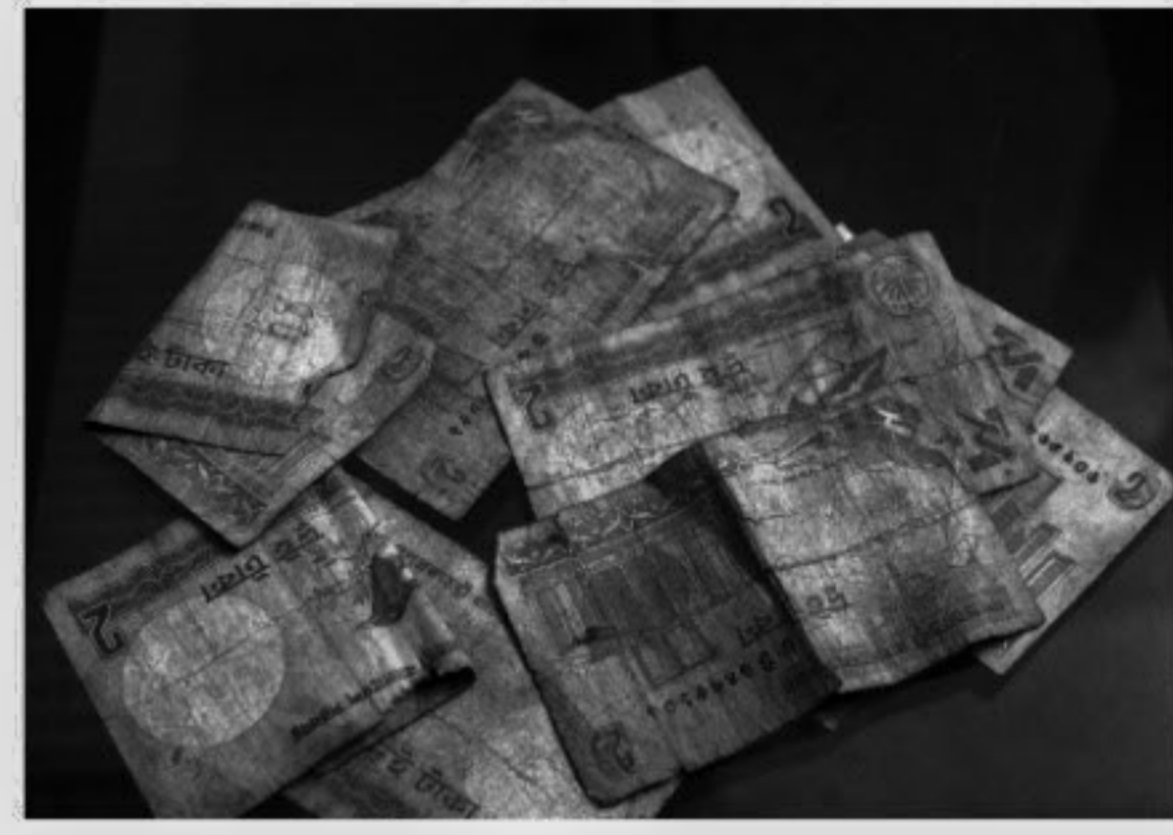
My bank kindly gives me bundles of 10 taka notes so I can have some 'change' but recently I was horrified to hear that the Bank of Bangladesh has stopped printing two taka notes!

This explains why so many two taka notes are filthy, dirty and falling apart and I wish to challenge this decision on the simple grounds of the respect due to both poor and rich in a democracy. We now have 1000 taka notes which are useless for paying salaries! (What does my driver do with one in Tongi?) But what of those who purchase their goods and services in smaller currency? It is essential for those who travel by rickshaw and wish to pay something different from a round figure.

When I lived in Haluaghat, I remember getting off the bus at Kakoli and going to the bank and asking for "New taka for Haluaghat, please!" The shopkeepers there were so thrilled to have clean notes when I got back! It is the end of the road and the currency was often dreadfully dirty. It is such a simple way of giving pleasure and dignity to ordinary people - to give them a decent currency!

At the moment, the government is being asked to make decisions on such major matters. Could it make this minor one that would bring a smile of appreciation to so many?

Angela Robinson
Gulshan, Dhaka



CI resigns

With the voluntary resignation of Mr. Abdul Matin, the chief of the war crimes investigation agency, what has the government taken as a lesson/learn? This type of incident is embarrassing both for the government and the individual concerned. Is there any guarantee that the next person selected will also be a correct choice? Therefore to avoid such incidents in future the government may formulate appropriate procedures.

I would suggest the following in line with the system in the USA:

a. All important positions/appointments of the state are to be approved/confirmed by the respective/concerned parliamentary committee.

b. The aspirants for the job will have to appear in a hearing with the parliamentary committee.

c. The parliamentary committee through a hearing process (questions and answers) will scrutinize whether the candidate is suitable for the appointment or not in terms of qualification, communication skills, whether the individual holds any radical views etc.

d. Finally the president may vet the selection by the parliamentary committee.

It is hoped that introduction of such a system will ensure that the appropriate person is appointed in important positions of the state which will ultimately benefit the people and the country.

Farah Khan
Gulshan
Dhaka

Black money

Black money generally means what is earned through illegal means. But, legally earned money would be black money if the earner does not pay tax on it.

Everybody needs to be alert about the negative impact of black money on the country. The authorities concerned also need to take necessary steps to curb black money.
Habibur Rashid Ismail
Chittagong

Tax issue

Recently, the issue of taxing the share traded income and mandatory TIN for BO Account created panic amongst the share investors. But it is also necessary that the government earns from such a huge transacting market. I think that the easiest way could be to impose a 0.1% (zero point one percent)

mandatory fees on all the amount transacted, which could easily bring Tk. 1 crore income to the government on the 1,000 crore transacted daily. This could be a hassle free way for both. There are many other benefits in taxing this way.

Mohammad Faruk
Nurjahan Road
Mohammadpur
Dhaka

Radio Bijoy

14th February 2009. It was 12'O clock. It is fourth floor of Shahid Mahfuzur Rahman Hall. Five students together, one in front of a microphone and one in front of a PC. They are trying to broadcast a live programme through radio, which is not traditional, but from online.

HSTU, it is the University of Northern Bangladesh, situated at Dinajpur district under Rajshahi division. At that time, "Online Radio" was a new concept for young generations of Bangladesh.

People were not that familiar with it. At that time two students of HSTU were trying to set up an online radio. It was only functional for listening songs. There were no live programmes. A few more students joined this group and tried to make it better. They gave a name to this radio and it was "Radio Something".

May 9, 2009 was a memorable day for HSTU. For the first time "IT festival'09" was held on the campus. The HSTU was in a festive mood. Radio Something took a stall in the festival and they broadcast the festival live, including seminars, workshops, gaming and programming contest results.

They have faced a lot of trouble in broadcasting their programmes. They failed to solve their problems & thought that it would not be possible for them to continue their radio service. However, they never stopped their work completely. They tried to contact some companies so that they could get some help. At last, they came into a partnership with Soft Tech Innovation Ltd.

They built up a new format, changed the name and reappeared as "Radio Bijoy".

"Radio Bijoy" is now one of the most popular online radio stations.
Md. Al-Helal
Faculty of Fisheries
HSTU
Dinajpur



Readers' instant comments on The Daily Star Online reports. Log on to thedailystar.net to leave your comments.

'Digital Bangladesh' down

Most of 250 official websites mock PM's vision for change (May 10, 2010)

This is a good example of the huge gap between our future ambitions and the reality of the present time. I hope this news article will help the government to appreciate the need to update government websites. This is a wake up call for the government.
Shahab Hannan

You have gathered the courage to tell the truth. It is my regular habit to visit the govt. websites and send feedback occasionally. But I never get a reply from them.
Saha

Please visit district portals, a group of dedicated admin.

officers with their slow Internet connection, lack of infrastructure supports (which are quite common in the remote parts of the country), lots of involvements with day to day tasks of district administration, are updating those portals regularly. We must see the sunny side along with the gloomy one!
Md Taufiqul Islam

There are so many talented web developers in Bangladesh, but we can't solve this simple issue!
Sawgat Chowdhury

People believe in work, not in vision.
Kajol

Certain things are disgraceful too. Go to http://www.imed.gov.bd/ -> about Bangladesh. It will direct you to Wikipedia site for information about Bangladesh.
Reader

Look at the GC / government of Canada websites. Their portals are all similar and all of them are maintained in an identical, universal way. Look at our sites. All are different. They have no consistency and professional appearance.
SNH

Right you are! It is a shame for Digital Bangladesh.
Md. Joynal Abedin

Very well written report! The government should look into it as the Right to Information Act was enacted for sharing information. Who is really responsible for this?
Thanks for this good report.
Alauddin

As part of the 'right to information', all the government websites need to be updated regularly with the latest information for the people.
Parvez Babul

I wonder how much money has already been spent to organise the opening-ceremony of websites! Bangladesh probably is the only country in the world that organises an opening-ceremony lavishly for websites!! Everything is messed up in this poor country.
Abir Iqbal

Very good report. Thanks for publishing it. It is a shame because we are going to make DIGITAL BANGLADESH with these things. People believe in work, not in vision.
Abdul Maleque

Time for the prime minister to reply. What did she really mean by Digital Bangladesh? Fourteen months is a long time for creating and activating the government websites.
Msa

Websites are not signboards. Information in the web must be updated immediately. But the Bangladesh government's various websites are nothing but digital signboards. Citizens need information to interact with the state. But the bureaucracy tends to keep everything close to its chest.
Abu Saeed Khan

The district portals (i.e. www.dcmoulvibazar.gov.bd) are updated. A group of dedicated admin. officers are doing a great job out there, with slow Internet and lots of involvement with day to day tasks of district administration.
Md Taufiqul Islam

This is the real position of our government websites. Engineers should get priorities in high official positions.
Md. Kamruzzaman

This is how everything goes in Bangladesh. Once I tried to contact the PM through her website but I found no way to interact with her, so I used an email address of someone of her office which was listed on the site. I have waited for a long time to have a reply but as of today absolutely no response from that side. Digital governance must be interactive.
Mahfuzul Hoque Chowdhury

The matter is that we are habituated to speaking and dreaming, taking initiatives. Unless we work more and talk less, our dream will ever remain a dream, it will never come true.
Mizan