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River dredging

Bangladesh is criss-crossed by rivers. The total waterways measure 24,000 km. Two of world's large rivers the Ganges-Padma and the Brahmaputra-Jamuna flows through this country. These rivers carry 2.4 billion tonnes of silt annually. The navigable route has been reduced by 2000km in the last 25 years due to siltation. At present the navigable route stands at 3800km only. So the government of Bangladesh decided to dredge rivers to increase navigability of the river at a cost of Tk. 11,472 crore in two phases. In the first phase, 23 rivers will be dredged at a cost of Tk. 4201 crore in 3 years and in second phase 53 rivers will be dredged at a cost of Tk. 7271 crore. The project work will be completed in 8 years starting from now. The government expects

89% assistance from donors. But work will begin now with our own resources. Dredging involves big investment besides technicalities. Annual maintenance is as important as dredging the channels to make investment useful. So one should consider future provisions for annual maintenance of the channel, Bangladesh Water Development Board with the assistance of Netherlands recently dredged Gorai River, the mouth of which has been silted up. An evaluation will be useful. BIWTA dredge the Daultdia Baghabari route. But in winter ferry service and vessels carrying fuel and other commodities frequently get stuck. These call for additional measures to reduce/stop siltation.
Serajul Islam
Gulshan, Dhaka



TOHID MOLLIK / DRINKNEWS

Sugar prices

The business page of a local English daily on May 10 had two reports published side by side on the above subject matter. The one by your staff reporter mourned the lack of profitability of sugar manufacturers. They state that the price fixed is too low and that they are losing Tk.20 per kg. which comes to a loss of Tk.20,000 per ton. The other report from a news agency states that the government is going to import 25,000 tons of sugar before Ramadan at US\$514.95 per ton. It was not clear, if this price was on FOB or C&F basis. In Bangladesh taka, based at @1\$=Tk.70, it comes to Tk.36,038 (rounded off) per ton, or a maximum of Tk.36.10 per kg. If the above price is on FOB basis, then assuming 15% duty, the landed cost at godown should not exceed Tk.42 per kg, covering duty and internal transport costs. Given these facts, the government can set an ex-mill price of Tk.39 per kg. Surely, this should eliminate the question of financial loss for the sugar manufacturers. They should however, maintain the same quality as of imported sugar. The usual complaint is poor colour of local sugar, which normally is considered to reflect the poor quality! Such consideration, for a price review, deserves the government's serious attention in the interest of saving foreign exchange and at the same time assisting the local producers to get a minimum return on investment. May be government should review the matter, and if found to be justified, increase the ex-mill price of sugar. After all, the industry, from farm to the factory, supports many farmers, and other low paid employees, in this rather labour intensive process of

production. Further, sugar is not an essential food item, and increase in its price will not affect the common man's cost of food. The few urban and other better off, can afford to tolerate a few taka increase in sugar price, and this may reduce the consumption of rich food items, and improve our health-- an additional benefit!
Engr. S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Wonder drug!
 Aspirin is popularly known as a 'Wonder Drug' because aspirin has a number of health benefits. Among the 'non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)' aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) is famous for its quick pain reducing anti-inflammatory property. Aspirin has the ability to prevent blood from clotting which helps in reducing coronary heart disease events and stroke. This wonder drug also helps in preventing colon cancer, dementia (e.g. Alzheimer's disease). A latest research found that aspirin is capable of preventing breast cancer during the early stages and can control further spreading of cancer after surgery. Meanwhile, even with so many good properties aspirin has its side effects. People who take aspirins regularly even in coated form remain at risk of developing a perforated ulcer or bleeding in the GI tract. Hence it is widely suggested by the physicians to take a lower dose of aspirin with necessary precautions.
Professor M Zahidul Haque
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University Dhaka

Stipends for girls
 The government is reportedly going to introduce stipends for female students at bache-

lor's level (pass course) aiming to help the female students of poor families continue their studies, reduce drop out rates and prevent their early marriage. We appreciate the initiative. The authorities need to keep an eye on the allocated money reaching the students properly. The poor and meritorious male students who face severe financial crisis to continue their studies should also be brought under such a programme.
Habibur Rashid Ismail
Chittagong

Great personalities
 Throughout the country, Tagore's 150th birth anniversary is being observed with great enthusiasm. He is the creator of many masterpieces of literature. I revere him for his immortal songs and short stories, especially Chuti, Shasti and Kabuliwala. In Chuti, he portrayed the life and tragedy of a restless teenager named Phatik. In Shasti, he raised his voice against the negative effect of feudalism and in Kabuliwala, he depicted fatherhood. The same thing can be seen in case of Nazrul and Saratchandra too. They all have become our national icons. They have a permanent place in the hearts of the non-Bengali readers too. They have tremendous influence upon our daily life. Their mistakes too teach us a lesson. Their contribution made our language richer. There are many people among us who recite Tagore's and Nazrul's poems, sing their songs and read their novels. Here and there, many competitions are being held. But could we really accept them from the core of our hearts? Why can't we love every section of people around us?
Pradip Das
Lecturer, BHP, CRP

Money - black or white

There should not have been any controversy on the money the former Prime Minister legalised during the caretaker administration which allowed everyone to bring their hidden money in the light by paying some penalties or taxes. The former prime minister legalized a huge sum that meant she had some money which was not white. This money possessed by anyone is called "black money". I believe, the prime minister's charges against the former prime minister of "whitening black money" are not wholly unfounded. The former prime minister should have explained her position in public about the sources of her untaxed money. The former prime minister is living in a government house the lease of which has been cancelled by the government. She is trying to stay in the house by lingering the court process one after another. This exercise is also not commensurate her position as a popular leader. Are these not damaging her integrity in public instead of augmenting?
Shafiqul Islam, NY

Budget

Many roundtables on the upcoming budget have been arranged by different NGOs. At first the core concept of budget should spread to the grassroots level. Then the budget turns into mass budget.
JNU
One-mail

Trial of war criminals

Trial of the war criminals or crime against humanity as you name it, is now the national demand. Being far away from my home land, I have the opportunity to follow the process in the media and offer my humble reactions to show my respect to 3 millions of people killed during the war of liberation in 1971; and thousands of mothers and sisters raped and tortured in the same period; not to speak of 10 million refugees taking shelter in India. The above is a historical fact. Now my question to those who are ignoring the historical facts and playing a negative role to disturb, distort and deny the trial of those criminals purely on political choice of their mentors and patrons. Q. Would you take the responsibility of those killed, tortured and raped, so that we can formally identify you and the law can be invoked for your trial and subsequent punishment awarded by the trial court set up for the purpose? Q. Would you please stop talking in vague terms and be specific on the list of criminals you think not covered under the present process of trial? I very firmly think that the nation has not given you any mandate to plead for the criminals. Be reasonable, be truthful to the nation.
Quadir
California, USA

Transport problem
 It is a serious problem for city dwellers. The authorities concerned should try to address the issue in right earnest, before it is too late.
Amitav
SSC examinee
Subidkhalil PI Pilot High School

Construct flyovers

Our family living in Canada decided to shift to Bangladesh for filial piety. Both of my father-in-law & mother-in-law were suffering from old age complication with other diseases, needed someone of their children to be beside them. What I am writing now is not a complaint, but I thought what we saw in Canada should be brought to the notice of the hospital authorities. In the hospital doctors and staff are seen to do everything with cordiality, and sincerity while I was in the hospital in Canada. I simply want our hospitals to improve their standard of services at par with other countries. Due to lack of such desired level of services in our country a large number of patients go to other countries spending huge foreign exchange. Now about traffic jam, which we did not see in our several years' stay in Canada, which is so common here in Dhaka that it needs no mention. I have to take my son to school in Dhanmondi facing terrible traffic jam all the way. We saw in Canada learners are subject to various tests before issuing license for driving. This type of tests if applied here and drivers are made to abide by those rules, it may reduce accident and traffic jam. Before I finish I want to bring to the notice of relevant authorities the level crossing accidents which another writer wrote about on October 23, 2009 saying the matter is too important to be put off for tomorrow. Endorsing his views fully I ardently request the authorities to start construction of flyovers in all the level crossings in Dhaka for ensuring safety of the commuters as well as reducing traffic jam in the city.
Jaba Aslam
Indira Road Dhaka

Mobile plants for desalination

The news published in your daily on April 26, 2010 stating that Japan would provide five water purification mobile desalination plants is no doubt a welcome development. People living in the coastal belts have been suffering from drinking water crisis due to salinity and after any natural disaster this problem is compounded. Only the sufferers can realize it. As I was Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Shyamnagar Upazila under Satkhira district about three years ago, I saw the untold sufferings, especially after two major disasters i.e. 'Sidor' and 'Aila'. After Aila the water bodies of this upazila were submerged by saline water except a few ponds located around the headquarters. People had been screaming for drinking water. Instantaneously we set up a plant for filtering water in our upazila headquarters and supplied it to different corners. The district administration also supplied water transported by lorries. Satkhira Jubo Academy supplied water in the whole of upazila setting up plants in the headquarters. Oxfam, GB Ganoshastya, Assistance Eau Et Environment, a French NGO, established plants for supplying water. People need drinking water not only for drinking but other purposes also like cooking. But we are able to supply only drinking water. People are compelled to use polluted water for other household

purposes and expose themselves to diarrhoea and other water borne diseases. So, desalination plants are badly needed in the coastal belts.
Dilip Kumar
Additional District Magistrate Habiganj

A suggestion

From time to time people of different classes, professions and occupations require various kinds of information, facts figures, statistics and guidance on different subjects and matters. They move from door to door, spend much of their valuable time, energy and money to get and collect their required information, statistics and guidance but unfortunately they fail. They do not know from where they would get or collect such information and statistics. It is suggested and requested that an Information Bureau may be opened immediately under the Ministry of Science, Information & Communication Technology to help the members of public in the interest of public service and people's right to information in this age of science, information and communication technology.
OH Kabir
Dhaka

Nawabs' property

We understand from reports that the present government is pretty determined to rehabilitate the scores of landless people around the country. It is believed, the process is already on to give away landed properties of Dhaka Nawab and Bhawal Raj Estate to the landless poor people. Land & Properties of over thousands of acres of both Nawab and Bhawal Raj Estate are at the sole custody of the government since abolishment of Zamindari act in 1952. The Nawab Estate owns land and properties in Dhaka, Savar, Narayanganj, Comilla, Keraniganj and Barisal etc.

The idea of rehabilitating the landless poor is indeed noble and praiseworthy but the government is aware of the condition of the members of Dhaka Nawab Estate! As a matter of fact financial condition of quite a lot of the family members are really horrible and are no better than the landless people whereas personal belongings of house and assets matter. Had Bhumi Board seriously looked after the vast properties of Dhaka Nawab Estate the condition of the members would have been fantastic and they would open heartedly supported the noble cause, but rather unfortunately Bhumi Board did not do what they were / are to do. Should the government allocate landed properties of Dhaka Nawab Estate, they should definitely give compensation to the members of Dhaka Nawab Family. The list of members of Dhaka Nawab family is with the Bhumi Sanskar Board, under the Ministry of Land Reforms Government. Therefore, it should not be difficult for the government to find out the rightful members of Dhaka Nawab Family. We hope this prayer will not go un-answered, after all this family had once greatly supported, contributed and always stood by the people of this land. It is-time their generation is helped and looked after.
Amember
Dhaka

Load shedding

At present load-shedding is a common thing in our country. It hampers our social and economic development greatly. Misuse of electricity and insufficient production are the main causes of it. This problem is going out of control day by day. We cannot think of a happy and care-free life because of this problem. The govt should take necessary steps against it. New laws may be passed to tackle it. People should be made conscious of it. Meetings and seminars may be arranged focusing on the bad effect of it. Thus if we try honestly, this problem will disappear from our country one day.
Md. Sojib Bhuiyan
Donia, Dhaka

Dress code

I have no grudge against somebody's wearing a suit even when the Temperature of the Country runs between 33° to 34° Celsius (figure obtained from the Met office). We are preaching to cut down power usage, but, I presume wearing a suit in the temperature mentioned, one definitely needs to cool down one's own body (when a suit is worn) and this has to be done in 3 (three) ways.
 a) Hand fan or pankha

Plundering trees

Cutting down trees on a large scale countywide is not new, but very recently it has drawn the attention of the people. For a few months the reports published on plundering of a huge number of trees have been trying to draw the notice of the authorities concerned. But the outcome is unclear. Without the interference of the respective ministry it is quite impossible for the law enforcers to take stern actions against the grabbers of the forests. It is claimed by some people that with the assistance of some dishonest forest officers of the govt. wood traders are running their illegal business and making the environment vulnerable. So, the time has come for the govt. to take effective measures against the plunderers.
Eng. Md. Meheub Haque
BUET



PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka Wasa and army

The emergency standby diesel generator of the Wasa pump located at Rashed Khan Menon Sarak, opposite Janakantha Bhaban, did not operate in case of electricity failure till end March 2010 leading to scarcity of water. Fortunately, the LGRD Minister and the AL general secretary declared deployment of the armed forces from April '2010 and thus the Wasa generator became operative leading to solution of water problem around this locality. What a success story of Wasa water supply! Corruption in Wasa is mentioned in TIB reports. The parliamentary standing committee has expressed dissatisfaction with Wasa affairs but corruption continues, though the prime minister hoped, while approving the new pay scale, that henceforth officials would refrain from corrupt activities. Wasa officials remained dormant during the two years of caretaker governance. The government should deploy the armed forces for collecting Wasa revenue also!
Mahmud Ali
Sydhesswaree Road Dhaka

Bus service

The bus route from Uttara to Bishwa Road cater to those who live in the areas such as Uttara, Azampur, Khilkhet, Uttarkhan, Dokkhinkhan, Nikunja, Kaola etc. Mostly salesmen, small entrepreneurs, students, teachers, Advocates and the stuff of the district court travel on the route. The journey is too long and traffic jam makes it more miserable; the people cannot concentrate on their work properly after making such a journey. Seating bus service which charges a fixed fare can reduce the pain of the commuters. It is very difficult to get a seat in the local buses which are available on the above route. The authorities should look into the matter.
Shagufta Tabassum Ahmed
One-mail

Bangla movies
 A few days ago, one of my friends came up with a smiling face saying that he had just watched a Bangla film. My other friends stared at him scornfully, and it seemed as if watching a Bangla film was a crime. Uttering its name in

front of the civilized society is considered bad manner. If we go a couple of years back, we would see our cinema industry was controlled by some crude people. The content of a cinema could be easily understood. At that time, many people used to say that blue films were much more decent than the Bangla films. But recently winds are changing. Some talented filmmakers are working in the film industry. "Monpura" by Giasuddin-al-selim and "Third person singular number" by Mostofa Sarwar Farooki are good examples. People from every class enjoyed these films. It's a matter of hope that young enthusiastic filmmakers are also moving into the film industry. Besides filmmakers, many young boys and girls with good family backgrounds are trying to establish their career as film actors. Maybe, we won't have to wait any longer to see gentlemen regularly going to the cinema halls along with their family members at the weekend. Let's hope for the best.
Shahadat Rajib
DU student

Eating up a canal!



The canal is more than 100 years old, flowing just beside Saadat University College, Karatia, Tangail, one of the first five university colleges of the country. This canal connects Karatia haat (village market) which is the biggest village bazaar of the country. But regrettably this 100-year old canal is about to die only because of some local unscrupulous land grabbers who have been gradually eating up this canal. This photo was taken on 7 May 2010 and it shows how they have been filling the basin of the canal. This tin-shed market is owned by a member of Karatia Union Parishad which is totally illegal. Local inhabitants are sick of his unscrupulous activities. Freeing rivers and canals from these illegal grabbers is one of the major tasks of the present government. I fervently request the government to take drastic action against the culprits and free this canal, so that it can again be full of water and fishes to help the local dwellers in all respects.
Khandaker Zia Hasan
Karatia, Tangail