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Cash incentives in budget

According to the tradition of Bangladesh a mega size budget is going to be declared in the beginning of upcoming month. To protect or motivate certain sectors a trend of 'cash incentive' is being practiced for last few years. Especially in agricultural sector it is a highly discussed, undoubtedly required, issue. Moreover, to survive from the effects of global recession, most of the industries have received such incentives this year from our government. Apparently, it seems good and a commendable venture but the reality is not depicting the same thing.

Cash is the most liquid, easiest to spend also, asset on earth. If the receiver is not capable enough to handle it properly, there is a great possibility of being misuse of that money. Most probably for this reason, we have not acquired the desired return from the loans provided by Bangladesh Krishi Bank or Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank. Generally after receiving the loan from banks the local farmers spend it within

a short time and don't hold enough money for the period of emergency. Actually this is very short-term incentive and it doesn't bring any sustainable result.

Incentive on basic development can be more helpful to the real stakeholders. In case of industries, offering four/five lakh taka is not much helpful or can't add value to their entire business operations. Rather, if the import duty on capital items or raw materials is reduced, it will improve their ability to compete with foreign competitors. In such a way, in case of agriculture, if the duties on useful machineries (e.g. pumps, power trawlers), fuels (diesel), insecticides or pesticides, seeds are reduced and supplied to the farmers timely at reasonable prices, it will bring positive results.

Md. Abdul Hamid
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BCL and govt

What is going on in the country? The activities of BCL are really shameful for the present govt as they have already failed to tackle the situation. Without controlling them it is quite tough for the govt to keep law and order under control. However, our honourable prime minister has already asked the lawmakers concerned to go tough against the BCL activists but the outcome is not fruitful yet.

I think the present govt has to play a dynamic role to stop this nuisance. Please ban student politics in the educational institutions across the country as a way to resolve it.

Eng. Md. Meheub Haque
BUET

The devilish activities of the BCL in educational institutions across the country are indeed disdainful. People voted for the grand alliance to change their fate. But the BCL is destroying everything, including the government's image.

Rahat Rafy
Communication & Journalism
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Article on Islam

This is about the write-up published in The Daily Star (3/3/2010) named "bridging the academic gap" by Mr. Abdus Sattar Molla. In his article he gave some misinformation about Islam, by which, I think, many can misunderstand Islam. He mentioned the Arabic word "Jihad" as "Religious war". Actually this meaning, religious war is

nowhere found in the Holy Quran or in the Hadiths. Jihad means "to strive/ to struggle." In another place he said, the Holy Quran (2:256) speaks about secular mentality which is totally wrong. I request him to study the Holy Quran once again with understanding. In another place he said "compulsory religious education course should put more emphasis on interpersonal social relations than on religious beliefs and rituals." I want to inform him that in religious beliefs and rituals of Islam interpersonal social relations are included. Apart from it, he wrote about "Hoqqullah and Hoqqul l'bad" and gave some explanations. I cordially request him to know the factual explanation of these from an Islamic scholar. In the fourth column he wrote, "Compulsory religious education up to Grade-10 has so far failed to raise the literate citizens' moral standards". If you want to increase moral standards of literate citizens you have to introduce more compulsory religious courses and it should be up to university level.

Md. Nazrul Islam
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Filling stations

Once upon a time the petrol filling stations were maintained well. Staff members were given new uniforms at regular intervals. Senior company officials used to visit these F/Stations at regular intervals. All "Service Equipments" were inspected/ repaired regularly. Visit Reports are maintained carefully.

Unfortunately, after the "nationalization" of all the oil companies things have deteriorated a lot. The officials do not visit these filling/service stations regularly. The equipments are not maintained well. Staff members are not provided with any 'uniform'.

No "Painting & Repairs" have been carried out for ages giving a dismal look to these petrol pumps. In many pumps the "drive ways" have not been repaired for ages where rainwater collects and damages the vehicles.

In many pumps no "Inspection Book" is maintained so that customers can record their comments. It is a fact that the three Nationalized Oil Companies are not serving the "people" properly. As there is no competition all officers/staff are sitting idle. Hence, the government should take quick action to revitalize these companies so that customers get proper "service."

Amotirist
Dhaka

For better traffic

For restoring the traffic communication system across the capital city Dhaka, the following measures must be undertaken:

Firstly, we all should come to know, understand & follow that president of the United States of America discharges official duties from the ground floor & basement of the White House, Washington DC. Therefore, in today's Dhaka we all should turn a sizeable portion of our residence into office.

Secondly, there should be

branching out of the educational institutions across the city, so that criss-crossing does not occur during the daytime of the weekly working days.

Thirdly, the housewives must come out of their residences with motorcars for shopping once a week like our aunts & mothers of the good old days!

Lastly, for shortening the tailbacks there should be moratorium on import of motor vehicles until all the underpasses, overpasses & flyovers are completed across the capital city of Bangladesh.

Golam Ashraf
Gulshan-1, Dhaka

An appeal

Like a wave of fresh air and renewed hope and after tolerating years of inertia of the Executive and the hot air of the Legislative, it is the Judiciary that has become alive to the problems that confound us all. Their Lordships in the Supreme and High Courts have rightly interceded in areas like illegal land grabbing, forest plundering, lake and river bank occupation, rivers and lakes pollution, removal of illegal billboards etc, where the rights of the people have been usurped by criminals due to the lax attitude and/or corruption of the relevant authorities.

May I therefore draw the kind attention of their Lordships to the great injustice meted out to a majority of Dhakabashis day in and day out on the streets of Dhaka itself, by banning the cheapest, most environmentally friendly, most easily available and fastest (under the present circumstances) mode of transport on major roads, thereby forcing over 50 lakh Dhakabashis to become pedestrians and depriving nearly 25 lakh rickshaw related people and their families of an honest livelihood. THERE IS AT PRESENT NO VIABLE ALTERNATIVE.

Hundreds of crores of takas are spent in installing expensive traffic lights, construction of freeways, the latest being Tk. 170 crore underpasses on Airport Road (DS 9 May) ready by 2011 (ridiculous!) and other gadgets to ease the passage of cars of a privileged few. Yet it is a fact (testified by experts) that while the 5 lakh + motor vehicles occupy 60-75% of road space, they carry only about 3-5% of passengers.

Banning rickshaws/vans from roads is causing immense suffering to millions of men, women, children, elderly, students, disabled, ill, infirm and small traders whose constitutional rights are also infringed. Banning rickshaws from roads is not the answer, rather jams are exacerbated because many sane car-owners who would use rickshaws for short journeys (a recent survey revealed that over 60% of journeys are 2 kms +), are now forced to bring their cars out on the road.

Your Lordships, please save Dhaka by bringing sanity on our roads!!!

Sikander Ahmed
Niketon, Gulshan-1, Dhaka

Dirty politics and students

Students have got involved in this politics. Regrettably, most of the students who are involved in dirty politics have taken arms in their hands. They ruin the academic atmo-

sphere through in-fighting and shedding blood of one another; even they are killing each other by being influenced by godfathers of politics.

Most of our politicians have no morality.

Ironically, the political parties blame one another for killings of meritorious students. It can be regarded as a sign of dirty politics. We must move out of this situation immediately. Violence and killing on the campuses must be stopped by correcting student politics.

Habibur Rashid Ismail
Chittagong

Mr. Jam

The curious diary of Mr. Jam, as its name implies, curious indeed and astute enough to find the jockey tone from nook and cranny, is certainly a breakthrough in writing articles and trenchantly witty write-ups enabled him to be one of the top columnists in Asia. A satirical tone spiced with an excellent sense of humour and marked moderation is Mr. Jam's palette which kept him as an entirely distinguished humorist.

Around one year ago, Mr. Jam cast a marked satire on the damning remarks by journalists in case of writing on the event of thumping shoes on George W. Bush. Some eminent journalists ended up their reports with a tone that thumping shoes is always an insulting remark 'in Iraq'. With the natural style of humour, Mr. Jam wrote, "Does thumping shoes show love in other parts of the world?" He was dejected at those silly remarks by journalists and ended up with a pessimistic tone, "people can be incredibly stupid."

That's the way to point the cursor towards silly remarks not in an irritating style but in a moderate manner. It may easily be understood from his write-ups that a simple event can be spicy and humorous due to witty presentation. In today's civilization bestowed with paraphernalia and machines, people like Mr. Jam conspicuously make a difference, make the expression of spontaneity emerging out of artificiality.

Subir Das
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Maintain silence

It is a matter of great regret that very often a congenial atmosphere in the exam hall is not well maintained. Invigilators frequently get engaged in gossiping. This gossip creates a great deal of disturbance for the students. Although the centre secretary is the only person supposed to use cell phone, invigilators use that device randomly breaking the complete silence. We the students sitting in the front bench are the worst sufferers in this context. When the cell phone rings our concentration is disturbed. It is high time the authorities found a solution to this problem.

Tashrif Billah
HSC Examinee, 2010
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Blessings of nature

Tree is one of the biggest blessings of nature for mankind. A tiny seed becomes a large tree, gives shed during summer and in winter all of

the leaves of the trees fall downward to indirectly supply us further sunlight and the atmosphere becomes warmer.

Trees assist in controlling temperature of the atmosphere. It is noticed that the places where there are trees are much cooler and hygienic for living. Therefore, people prefer to spend their life in regions which are away from concrete jungle of cities. Deforestation is common these days; this is creating loads of problems. A few of the hazards from deforestation are as follows:

1) Soil erosion: The trees aid in keeping the soil intact with their roots but when there is lot of cutting of trees, the soil is washed away with water during the rains. And during floods it creates disorder. Because of soil erosion the water level also falls down.

2) Contamination: Trees help in controlling the pollution in the air and if there are no trees, we have to face more air pollution. Global Warming is becoming a foremost problem these days. Glaciers are melting and the Sea Level is rising gradually. This is indirectly creating lot of ecological problems.

According to The National Arbor Day Foundation, "Trees can be a stimulus to economic development, attracting new business and tourism. Commercial retail areas are more attractive to shoppers, apartments rent more quickly, tenants stay longer, and space in a wooded setting is more valuable to sell or rent."

The importance of trees is indescribable!
Shohag Mostafaj
MBA (Strategic & International Management)
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Khaleda's threat

The DS's questions to Begum Khaleda Zia through its edito-

Irene Khan joins DS

It's great news for the newspaper as well as thousands of readers that Irene Khan is joining The Daily Star. Irene Khan, an internationally recognized human



rights advocate, could easily settle in any other prosperous country but she did not do so. Her decision to stay with us would serve as a burning example of patriotism when a large portion of our brilliant students migrate to the west for better education as well as to settle down there. From the newspaper, I came to know that she would be contributing in the field of human rights, good governance, gender issues and democracy.

In this regard, being a regular reader of The Daily Star, I have a request for her, please look into the poor road-traffic system of our country which has already snatched away the lives of thousands of people.

Joining of Irene Khan will definitely add a new dimension to The Daily Star.

Pradip Das
Lecturer
BHPI, CRP

Ship breaking yards

Most of the ship breaking yards of our country are located in Chittagong, adjacent to the Bay of Bengal. These ship breaking yards provide us a major percentage of our need of iron. These also give us working opportunities for our unemployed people. In spite of these opportunities, these yards are so much harmful for our environment as well as our eco-system. Every year these yards receive many ships for breaking which contains numerous harmful substances including oil, asbestos, toxic colours and various poisonous chemical substances.

The final destination of these substances is our Bay of Bengal. Even, the small broken pieces of iron are thrown into sea which makes sea water unfavourable for plants and living beings. As a result, the eco-system of our sea is hampered. The broken powder of iron and lead is freed in the air. By inhaling this polluted air, many people adjacent to this area are suffering from numerous respiratory diseases.

These ship-breaking yards are also responsible for sound pollution.

The sound which is produced in yards exceeds nor-

mal tolerable limit. Moreover, the labourers of ship breaking yards are engaged in a hazardous occupation. They lose their lives in accidents which occur in ship breaking yards frequently. On 26 December 2009, many workers lost their lives in a yard in Madambar Hat in Chittagong. Injured labourers are not also treated well and they get no compensation from the owners. Ships in this yard come from different developed countries of Europe and we bear the burden. As it has so much adverse effects on our environment, our government should take steps to close these ship breaking yards.

Md. Belal Hossain Riad
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Reading habit
Nowadays, our new generation is getting less interested in reading and they are more inclined, almost addicted, to computer games and TV. Though, it is necessary to have a visual version of what we are acquiring from our visible world, reading habit is indispensable for comprehensive learning. Reading of various books, newspapers, articles and journals bring us to a new level of sophistication.

Our young generation

Shafiqul Islam, NY

Student politics in disarray

Nowadays violence, terrorism, bloodshed, killing and robbery are attributed to the student wings of different political parties. All the campuses of the universities have become a stage of performing the drama of political clashes

where the cops, teachers, intellectuals and the common students are the silent spectators. Consequently, students, the hope and future of our country, are breaking the backbone of the nation and dumping the ray of hope into dust. So frustrating is it that seizing the hall, torturing the opponents, unscheduled closure of colleges and universities, session jams have struck firm roots in the seats of learning. How can they ignore their golden past?

At present, being a member of a student organisation means free and healthy meal, having an illegal seat in the hall, getting tender and even managing a good job. As a result, they are changing the party with the change of the government. In order to rescue them from the inferno, our prime minister should come forward to take necessary initiatives to stop the dreadful activities on the campuses.

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Poor

pronunciation

Like every other citizen, I regularly watch news in our private Bangla channels. It is very embarrassing to hear that still some of the reporters cannot even pronounce some words properly. It's very common to hear some of the reporters saying 'SANNEL' instead of 'Channel'. Very embarrassing!

Mainly, it's the duty of the channel authorities to correct them and then put them on shows.

Shamrin Afia Adiba
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Save the rivers



For most of the people, rivers are the main sources of livelihood and transportation. With the rapid growth of urbanization, the breadth of rivers is getting narrowed and the banks are being encroached by the influential people. The major rivers surrounding Dhaka ---Buringanga, Sitalakhya and Turag -- are now mortally sick.

At the beginning of this year, the government took the bold step of cleaning the riverbeds and a ray of hope of sav-

ing the rivers from "Death" was there. Though the step is on, the garbage and filthy wastes are being dumped into water.

Now to save the rivers from pollution we need concerted efforts, otherwise the existence of the rivers will be further threatened.

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