

Manpower agents or cheats?

Recently, the Honourable Prime Minister warned the predatory manpower exporters of serious action. The ineffectuality and hollowness of such warning has been delineated in the editorial of The Daily Star (May 22, 2010), which needs no further elaboration.

The foul play of the recruiting agents is the resultant culmination of many loophole factors. In almost every case, the recruiting agents get indulgence from the ruling elite. The law enforcing agencies also play a supportive role to embolden the culprits, perhaps in lieu of something!

While I worked as an employee in a recruiting agency for a few months, I experienced the sufferings of the poor people caused by the cheats, middlemen and rich recruiting agents. The recruiting agents used to deploy clever people from across the country who generally choose the poor who have some sorts of compulsion to earn more to support their family well. They have to pay the 'fees' or charges in advance, selling out their last resources at a minimal price.

Then begins the true story of harassment. Shifting of dates for flying abroad frequently takes place. Coming from the remote villages, it is difficult for the aspirants to pursue the mighty recruiting agents. If anybody asks his money back to the middlemen they would bring him to the recruiting agents. If

agents cannot manage him coaxing and cajoling or threatening him, they will file a case of extortion, cheating or even dacoity against the poor job seeker.

While a case is registered, the police come into action with a greater velocity taking side with the rich recruiting agents. After a substantial time of imprisonment, the frustrated aspirant would give up hope and go back home empty handed.

Sometimes the recruiting agents would send the aspirant abroad with false passports, visas and other documents. Then also either the aspirant, skilled or unskilled, has to undergo a precarious life there or get imprisoned abroad or if he is lucky enough, comes back home to be arrested again by the police at the very threshold of the airport. This time they will be liable to be punished for making and procuring false passports, visas and tarnishing the image of the country abroad! For obvious reasons, again the recruiting agents remain out of the net.

Now, if the recruiting agents are to be punished at all, as the Honourable Prime Minister warned, can those responsible members of the law enforcers be brought to book? Probably not. And that's the saddest part of the endless drudgery!

Ahmed Munir
Purana Paltan Dhaka



MUNIR UZZAMAN / DRINKNEWS

Power of forgiveness

Many years ago I read a true story which touched me very much and often it comes to my mind. It was written by a man called John Kord Lagemann. He spoke of a man who was sitting in a railroad coach next to a young man who was obviously depressed. Finally the man revealed he was a convict returning from a distant prison. His imprisonment had bought shame on his family, and they had neither visited him nor written often. He hoped, however, that this was only because they were too poor to travel, too uneducated to write. He hoped, despite the evidence, that they had forgiven him.

To make it easy for him, however he had written them to put up a signal for him when the train passed their little farm on the outskirts of town. If his family had forgiven him, they were to put up a white ribbon on the big apple tree near the tracks. If they didn't want him back, he would stay on the train and probably go west. As the train neared his hometown, his suspense became so great he couldn't bear to look out the window.

His companion changed places with him and said he would watch for the apple tree. In a minute, he put his hand on the young convicts arm. "there it is" he whispered, his eyes bright with sudden tears. "its alright" the whole tree was white with ribbons.

In an instant, all the bitterness that had poisoned a life was dispelled. "I felt as if I had witnessed a miracle" the other man said. "perhaps I had"

Forgiveness can bring peace to our hearts, and none should underestimate its power.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong

Good results, but...

Good results of SSC are soaring higher than expectation every year. Board examinations are just like a veiled fiction and when we unravel it we face the tragedy. Every year the number of GPA-5 students goes on increasing. Besides, this year NCTB has introduced the structural question based examination for the first time. But before undertaking this daunting task, they didn't consider for a

while the students' problems. In fact, there had been hardly any teaching courses for the teachers. Moreover, the little amount of information that the teachers grab from different sources is not even enough to set questions for school exams, let alone the board exams.

Whether it is a matter of carelessness or failure of the respective boards, the students are the real sufferers. Most of the wretched students blame their fate for this misfortune. But, is it really the fate that brought us to this position? Unfortunately, the answer is no.

Sarah Nahar
One-mail

Online addiction!

I think Twitter, Myspace and Facebook are social networks helping people to communicate with others. Just think about the cousin or friend who's now abroad. Without the social networks, would it be possible to connect with them every day? You can see their activities online now on your homepage. Okay, let's not go far. It is connecting us with the relatives who're in the city or outside Dhaka. We can meet friends every day at schools and workplaces, but not our relatives.

We're getting important notifications about classes and exams through online groups and communities. Suppose tomorrow there will be an extra class, I'm getting that information from the online groups. So there are sunny sides of social networks. Indeed, it is true that these networks can be very distracting sometimes for the students. Sometimes we're spending too much time. Twitter and Facebook are always in our heads. And needless to say, this is hampering studies. Another thing is, previously we're very much fond of books. Reading habit is declining to a great extent as online networks and games are rapidly becoming means to pastime which is a matter of concern. This happens because we don't just check out the Facebook pages and log out, rather we keep browsing or play Farmville, or else keep commenting on our pals' status updates and photo albums! Well, this may be natural. There's always an urge in humans to communicate with others as they're social beings. But there's a

remedy too. No disease is incurable.

I think students should be aware of the time they're spending online, not more than a specific amount of time should be spent there.

Cantara Wali Ruhi
DU

Poverty

The most important causes of poverty all over the world are poor education, teen parenthood, lack of opportunities, and being a child or elderly. Lack of food, natural resources, and efficient government are some of the causes. Taxes also cause poverty. In our country households with lower levels of education face difficulty in escaping poverty. It seems a chronic problem for us.

So, the emphasis should be on educating the nation as a whole.

S. M. Rumen
West Firoz Shah Housing Estate Pahartali, Chittagong

Labour unrest

Labour unrest has become the most talked about issue across the country. Garments industry is now the 2nd largest sector that is contributing to our economy a lot. Statistics show about 95 percent workers engaged in this sector are women. But the recent unrest led this industry to destruction. Extortion, killing, looting, strike have become quite common in the present context of the country. To resolve it, I want to draw the attention of the authorities concerned on the following points:

- 1) Introduce a new pay scale for the workers as very low wage is given to them. The workers have to lead a precarious life with this meagre income.
- 2) Introduction of trade union to work as a co-ordinator between workers and owners to solve disputed issues is a must.
- 3) Ensure wages, bonus and dues timely.
- 4) Investigate to find out the miscreants who hatch conspiracy to destroy this sector as well as our economy.
- 5) Set up a monitoring cell on a monthly basis to look after the performance of the industries.
- 6) Deploy police in the EPZ areas to keep law and order under control.

Eng. Md. Mehebab Haque
BUET

Moudud's campaign

It has been reported in the print media that Barrister Moudud Ahmed has vowed to bring General Moin U Ahmed and other CTG leaders to justice for what he called their illegal take-over of state power which according to Barrister Moudud, pushed the nation to an economic disaster. He strongly vowed that he is organising a countrywide campaign in this respect.

Barrister Moudud, it is believed, is the one who masterminded BNP's election engineering to stage a one-sided election on 22d January under a voter list with more than one crore fake voters.

He extended the retirement age of the Chief Justice, he advised the incumbent president, a BNP man, to take over as head of the caretaker admin violating the constitutional provisions at that time. While the country was burning, and an imminent civil war was knocking its doors, he was not only advocating holding of an election, he was trying to hold the election without participation of all other political parties in the country.

But I firmly believe the people of Bangladesh do not respect him as an honest politician. He is trying to organise the people who were caught by the CTG for their illegal amassing of wealth. Their real faces were unveiled by the CTG and many of them were jailed. But, I think, he is on the wrong track. It was the heroes of 1/11 who successfully prepared a correct voter list, gave the nation a National ID, and held a genuine free, fair and credible election in the country. The present neutral and powerful Election Commission is the creation of the CTG. The heroes brought the country back to a real democratic track.

I hope good sense will prevail on him and he will desist from such campaigning. The campaign will do more harm than good.

Shafiqul Islam, NY

Facebook

The blocking of Facebook for what they called the satiric portrayal of some of our politicians including the PM and the leader of the opposition was least acceptable and hence only exposed the intolerance of the ruling people. When the government does not spare a single opportunity of talking about free access to information and 'a digital Bangladesh', the hasty move to silence critics on the cyberspace by blocking the Facebook not only transmitted a wrong signal to the outside world, but was also tantamount to negating the freedom of expression guaranteed by the Constitution. By blocking a social networking site reputed worldwide, were we going to follow the examples of the bigots in Iran and Afghanistan?

However, the good news is that the government has withdrawn the ban.

Sohan Rehman
One-mail



PHOTO STAR

Road accidents

Deaths on the roads across the country have assumed a monstrous proportion. You come across the death news in road accidents almost every day; either an erratic bus collides and crushes another vehicle or some passers by are run over by some over jaunty vehicles driven by inefficient and crazy drivers without a valid driving licence --- a common but tragic phenomenon unchecked at work at the cost of human lives.

Many talks, protests and resolutions are being arranged to stop these nauseating and life-taking incidents;

yet the problem persists.

It is a sad situation; rather a desperate one prevailing in our social lives here. Take the death of another BUET student who was run over by a bus. A budding youth of excellence with all hopes and aspirations rather the life itself was gone to the dust leaving his family all bereft. What guarantee he given by his country? Is it not a loss for the country as well?

The issue deserves immediate attention.

Rafiqul Islam Rime
Agrabad, Chittagong

Nuclear power plant

Recently, Bangladesh and Russia signed a framework agreement for development of a nuclear power plant. Bangladesh plans to produce about 2000 KB energy from that plant.

We hope that our country will be greatly benefited by it.

Rahad Jannatul Islam
One-mail

Performance award

Every year a huge number of Hajj pilgrims are visiting the holy places of Mecca and Medina to perform Holy Hajj and say salam to our beloved Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Pbuh). This year, according to the agreement signed between the government of Saudi Arabia and the government of Bangladesh, 75,000 people from Bangladesh will be allowed to go for Hajj, out of which fifteen thousand through the ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) and the rest sixty thousand will go through govt. approved Hajj agents. Hajj is a major religious ritual and it deserves to be given top priority in respect of service.

To create competitiveness among the Hajj agents, the government should introduce performance award to be given after completion of Hajj every year to the agents who delivered best services to the Hajjis.

I hope the Ministry of Religious Affairs will consider my appeal and introduce the performance award for the best three service providers to the Hajjis every year.

Alhajj Md. Abdul Mannan Howlader
Executive Director Haramine Travels and Tours Ltd. Motijheel C/A, Dhaka

Education and development

If people are educated then they can differentiate between right and wrong. There are eight millennium goals and they are-- eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS malaria and other diseases, and ensure environmental sustainability and global partnership for development.

I think among these eight millennium goals, achieving universal primary education is the most important one for Bangladesh. In our country the literacy rate is 43.1%. Many people are illiterate. The present education system is not bringing any change in society. In this system there is no link between education and its application and that is why the condition of our country is declining day by

Education and hygiene



SHAFIQUK ISLAM KAJOL / DRINKNEWS

It is a matter of great concern and regret that as a nation our consciousness regarding hygiene is very poor. You'll find people doing all sorts of things that are considered unacceptable according to the norms of social and personal hygiene. It comes as no surprise that we often get to see outbreaks of diarrhoea, typhoid and other diseases that can easily be prevented if we become a bit more knowledgeable on how these diseases are caused and how these spread.

I think we can blame our education system for its lack of initiative in imparting such important education on life to the masses. While studying for my GCE O level Biology, I came to learn the importance of maintaining personal hygiene, there I've read about pathogens and some diseases with social importance (which causes great loss to society in terms of both lives and wealth and most importantly these are very much preventable). I got to learn how they are caused and how these spread

among the masses. It helped me become more aware and hence more responsible towards society. Recently, I had the opportunity to go through the Biology books of SSC and HSC respectively, but I found little information regarding the importance of maintaining personal hygiene and such diseases. I found most of the contents of these books hold little value if you want to learn something that you might find useful in your life, unless you're interested in how the digestive track of a frog looks like and how many layers of cuticle a cockroach has. This is another issue I'd probably write about some-time later.

I'd like to draw the attention of the decision makers to include a section in the schoolbooks on the importance of maintaining personal hygiene and the socially important diseases from class five up to class eight.

Hanaan Toaha
One-mail

day. The government has to play a vital role to bring about a drastic change in the education system. People obtain higher degrees but cannot make use of it. We mainly need informal education. The government should provide more skill-based training programmes like vocational training. The government should also give more job opportunities to the skilled workers, so that people can earn their own living.

If an educated person knows about his role and responsibilities, he can bring a change in society. So, it is time for the government to introduce need based education.

MD. Aiman Sharif
The Aga Khan School, Dhaka

Cost cutting in Britain

A staggering 156 billion pounds in deficit has forced the new Tory-Libdem government of the UK to cut costs at every conceivable area, including asking ministers to walk to office or take public transport. Shocking, as it may seem, for the Britons, from a life style of plenty to a life of austerity will be a tough go, no

doubt. This is the price of wasteful expenditures over so many years.

The Americans are in deep trouble already, so are many European countries. Sooner the so-called rich countries realise that SIMPLE LIVING is the best policy, the better. Oriental nations knew this since centuries, its only now that the West has to re-learn from the East, on how to lead a decent life following the age old dictum-- waste not, want not.

Habib Rabbani
Shantinagar Dhaka

Our man Musa!

When Musa Ibrahim as the first ever Bangladeshi conqueror reached the summit of Mount Everest to hoist the Flag of Bangladesh, he took down his name in gold in our history. He not only made history, but also became the national hero in the hearts of sixteen core people of Bangladesh. No eulogy is enough to praise his deed, as it was a utopian thinking for us before 23rd May, 2010 to reach Mount Everest.

But Musa has made it possible with his indomitable spirit and sky-high determination which will inspire us to win the invincible world and surpass all types of obstacles we face in our life with a view to changing the way of the world. Indeed, Musa Ibrahim, the pride and glory of our country, can be an idol for us.

Md. Golam Moula Pias
Dept. of English Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Sylhet

Musa Ibrahim is the first Bangladeshi who has conquered the Everest. There is no doubt that the whole nation is proud of Musa's triumph.

Md. Al-Helal
Faculty of Fisheries Hajee Danesh Science & Technology University Dinajpur

Tinted glass

So far we know, using tinted glasses in the cars and jeeps is prohibited in our country, albeit a good number of those are garbed with coloured covers flouting the laws. Some of those are so darkly covered that you cannot even recognise who is in, which sometimes scares us. These sorts of transports sometimes may be used by the criminals to hide themselves in as and when they think necessary.

If there is any law, it should be enforced sincerely and the

violators must be dealt with due firmly.

Monzur Rahman
Dhaka

PM's advice to physicians

While addressing a function in the city's Mohakhali area on 25 May, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called upon the physicians to render their services to the poor people, especially in the remote areas, being confident of their profession, knowledge and experience.

She also said steps were being taken to update the National Health Policy for the overall development of the country's health sector.

It is regrettable that nowadays most of the doctors charge a big sum of money from patients, even for prescribing. Some of them behave rudely with patients if they fail to pay the exorbitant amount of money.

This must be stopped.

Habibur Rashid Ismail
Chittagong

Tourism industry

In recent years tourism has become a major element in the balance of payments of many countries. At present Bangladesh is failing miserably in attracting international tourists. Bangladesh accounts for only 4.5% of all international tourists visiting South Asian countries, and almost two-thirds of foreign tourist arrivals in Bangladesh are from India, Pakistan and other South Asian countries. The majority of visitors from the UK and USA are ethnic Bangladeshis, who come to visit relatives and friends. Almost 60% of foreign tourist arrivals are for business or official purposes, and the number of leisure tourist arrivals is insignificant. There are many possibilities of tourism industry in Bangladesh and tourist spots are available. But there are problems in this sector. The problems are given below--

--Inadequate role of the national tourist organisations.

--Lack of essential infrastructure.

--Failure in identifying the targets and potential markets.

--Unplanned development and construction projects.

--Lack of government undertaking.

So, the government of Bangladesh and other organisations should take proper steps for development of the tourism industry.

Md. Tanjil
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