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No effluent treatment!

As river pollution around the city has already turned critical, it should be stopped immediately for the betterment of this mega city. Most of the industries of Dhaka are located near the rivers and 70% of them have no Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) to treat industrial wastewater. As a result, factories are disposing of effluents without any treatment to the nearby river. Since industrial wastewater possesses high amount of heavy metal (cadmium, aluminium, zinc), non-biodegradable compounds, high alkalinity, high suspended solid, high Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD), the river ecosystems are becoming criti-

cally endangered. Data from NGOs and other monitoring authorities show that Buriganga, Shitalakhya, Turag, Balu receive about 1.9 million cubic meters of untreated water on daily basis which is alarming for aquatic life and human health.

Effluent treatment technologies have been developed significantly. Radiation induced treatment technology is a viable solution for treating dangerous effluents originating from textiles, tanneries and other industries.

Yeahia Ali Mamun
Dept. of Soil, Water and Environment
University of Dhaka



MUNEM WASIF / DRINKNEWS

US should be impartial

We are stunned by the belligerent attitude of Israel, after invading an aid carrying ship in the international water, killing nine people and injuring many, it has no regrets, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu clearly stated he won't apologize for the incident.

People all over the world are watching and expressing condemnation over this heinous act, how could a small country like Israel defy the world? But it is no secret, Israel knows that it can get away with anything because it has got the blessings of the United States.

US Vice President Joe Biden has said that Israel has not done any wrong by attacking the ship, we did not expect this from him.

When Barack Obama, the Senator from Illinois got the presidential nomination we became very happy and prayed for him because he seemed to be a kind, wise and understanding person, the opposite of G.W. Bush. He talked about change, his slogans were "change we need" and "Yes, we can". Barack Obama became the 44th President of the United States, and our hopes soared believing he would not remain indifferent to other countries, and as a superpower, America has to intervene and stop any wrong doing.

But now we are dismayed because Israel has not become subdued by the new administration, the Palestinians are suffering in their hands as before, there is no respite for them.

We request US President Barack Obama not to remain indifferent to this issue.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong

CHT issue

The problem of CHT is not the problem of CHT people only; it's a national problem of Bangladesh.

I hope the government will address the issue with a sense of urgency.

Mitel Chakma
Sewrapara, Dhaka



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Flags

Supporters of different football teams are buying and displaying the national flags of the respective countries. But unfortunately, most of these football admirers are reluctant to show proper respect to the flags. Many of them keep the flags hoisted at evening and night, some even keep the flags outside during thunderstorms. Moreover, some dim-witted tailors are making flags with their own-invented length-width ratios, patterns and writings. All of these activities demonstrate utter disrespect to the countries concerned.

The national flag is the symbol of freedom and sovereignty of a country. Disregarding the flag of a country means humiliating its independence and liberty.

I hope the supporters will realize the importance of this issue and make a little more effort to ensure proper respect to the national flags of other countries.

Shahriar Kabir
Eskaton Garden Govt. Officers' Quarters
Dhaka

Biodiversity

Biodiversity is the foundation of life on Earth. It underpins the functioning of ecosystems from which we derive essential products and services such as oxygen, food, fresh water and medicines.

The Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) defines biodiversity as "the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems".

Biodiversity is an essential resource base for development and livelihood security through provision of biological resources and ecosystem services. Effective biodiversity conservation and ecosystems management can lead to higher levels of carbon sequestration and hence climate change mitigation.

In Bangladesh over 60 million people are dependent on aquatic resources every

day. The world's poor, particularly in rural areas, depend on biological resources for as much as 90% of their needs, including food, fuel, medicine, shelter and transportation. 70% of the world's poor live in rural areas and depend directly on biodiversity for their livelihoods.

Have we as a nation realised its importance?
Md. Humayun Kabir
Chairman
Organization for Research and Development of Environment in Bangladesh (ORDEB)

Banani-Gulshan Lake

Thank you for your article published on your June 02, 2010 issue under the heading: "Serve notices on canal grabbers to remove structures - JS body asks Dhaka DC" with a photograph showing pollution of Gulshan-Banani Lake by shanty dwellers living along the shore of the lake on Banani side. Your photograph showing a vivid & ugly scene, just near the recently built bridge connecting Banani with Gulshan via Banani Road No.11 is well known to the residents of Banani -- particularly those having residence along the side of the lake.

I am quite certain your paper must have known where the rubbish/human waste of the shanties ultimately end up! The stench is unbearable & what goes through our mind about the guardian of the lake is unprintable.

However, the Warid Telecom, whose corporate office happens to be the first building on the lake on Kemal Ata Ave., where the rubbish finally accumulate, tries in vain to have the rubbish removed by employing people with boats to clear the lake & deposit the rubbish on the shore although the stench remains. And, by next morning, it is back to square one!

Once in a while, you are quite vocal about pollution etc. We are just ordinary citizens without any clout - political or otherwise. And, therefore, we urge you to not print photos only (99 out of 100 times - just photos do not

work in our system). Come up strongly with an investigating report to save the lake.

Ashfaq Chowdhry
Banani, Dhaka

No Tobacco Day

The World No Tobacco Day was observed on 31 May 2010. A U.S. State Department statement issued on the occasion of the World No Tobacco Day 2010 expressed concern over the greater exposure to cigarette marketing among young women. The statement said "A new report issued on May 27th by the U.S. Center for Diseases Control (CDC) examines gender differences in tobacco use and awareness of tobacco marketing. Particularly troubling is new global data from Bangladesh, Thailand, Uruguay, indicating cigarette marketing among young women (ages 15 to 24) than older women (over 24 years).

Under the new law enacted in 2009 in the United States, it requires to print health warning occupying 50 percent of the front and back surface of cigarette pack ensuring that Americans are well informed about the risks of tobacco use.

Tobacco use is the single leading preventable cause of death in the world and kills up to half of those who use it.
Professor M Zahidul Haque
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University
Dhaka

Electrocution

We have observed in last 2/3 weeks that people have been killed being electrocuted coming into contact with 11,000 volts primary distribution line which passes near their balconies in open conductor. The last one being a disaster of such a magnitude that the accident from the 11 kv line caused a great fire, bursting two transformers and thereby killing some 113 people is just one stroke lasting a few seconds.

No one really cares to see that the 11 kv line spread throughout all the congested streets through open conductor and quite often the line is reachable by bare hand and fatal accident might happen.

The govt. has recently instituted as Energy Regulatory Commission. It is very unfortunate that the commission has been given the authority to issue license for distribution of petroleum products which included among other items lubricants. Possibly the govt. could not understand that plastic products are also derivatives of petroleum crude, otherwise BERC would ask for license for these items also.

One fails to understand as to why BERC could not identify electricity as an item of energy while it could do so in the case of lubricants. How funny!

BERC should look immediately into the electricity Generation, Transmission and Distribution with most emphasis on distribution. They should start with engaging a body on national level that would be entrusted with developing National Electric Code (NEC) similar to building code. In this NEC every installation shall be codified so that accident is minimized.

Voltage regulation is a major problem and the electricity service providers shall regulate their supplied voltage so that the variation does not exceed 6% and any consumer who suffers loss of their equipments because of voltage variation, in excess of 6% shall be entitled to compensation.

As for checking accidents

from 11 kv distribution line, the govt. should issue directives immediately to replace all 11 kv open conductor by insulated conductors and all future conductors to be used in city areas where clearance is not adequate new installation shall be of insulated conductors.

Nurul Basher
Dhaka

Don't ignore them

Imagine, a boy equally talented, has two eyes, one nose like you but there is only one difference--he is poor and you are rich and only for that reason he cannot study. Around me, there are many students who cannot go to school. So, I took a step. I have distributed most of my Bengali books to the unfortunate boys. I discovered that they also like to read and have a very good ability to understand a subject. The young boys who are about only five or six years old were very happy to see the colourful story books that I gave them. They need money but more importantly they need proper education. So, I urge the whole world, please donate books (especially colourful ones) to 46 Flora Pass Road (beside A.K. Khan Group Head Office) Ambagan, Chittagong, so that I can distribute those to the unfortunate children.

Let us build an educated Bangladesh!
Shafeen Mahmood
Little Jewels School
Chittagong

Everest story

I think your newspaper was covering Musa's Everest success story a bit too much. In one word "News Blitzkrieg" was going on now in both DS and the Prothom Alo. There is no denying the marvellous achievement of Musa, Kudos to him. I express my heartfelt congratulations to him. Every Bangladeshi should be proud of this achievement. It is an occasion for celebration too.

We are spending 10 taka every day to read your newspaper with the expectation of having some news with substance. We also recognise that our life in Bangladesh is full of constraints, hunger, poverty, corruption, poor image crisis, we are really hungry for any news on success. However, you need to draw the line between private domain vs. public domain.

We may need to hold our emotional exuberance to a tolerable limit, at least in public domain.
Babu Bhattacharya
Gulshan 1, Dhaka

Ad-hoc power solution

A front-page article on the subject was published in a local daily on June 1. The writer expressed some critical views regarding the government's approach to energy solutions, which was somewhat ad-hoc in my opinion. It is rather a theoretical advice, and to an extent not very rational or pragmatic in real life!

The observations of the BUET professor were based on facts and realities.

AHM Akash
Natore Govt High school
Natore

The government should go all out for coal mining; through underground mining if necessary. We have one underground mine, and must have acquired some hands-on knowledge on the matter; so sinking two more mines should not be so difficult for us. This should help us to provide fuel for (2X500),

Nimtoli disaster



This is the worst fire disaster the nation has witnessed. People of the most densely populated Dhaka city were afraid of earthquake and for a long time they were being warned of countless loss of lives and widespread property damage as well as environmental disaster. But this blaze at Nimtoli involving a few houses has shown us a new dimension of potential risks that we are living with.

The government has formed a committee to investigate this fire disaster a normal course of action that is followed in all such cases. But ultimately, people do not know about the recommendations as well as implementation of corrective and preventive measures. Already, there is uproar about chemical outlets in residential areas and hundreds of locals took to the street chanting slogans as a mobile court raided warehouses and factories of flammable materials in Nimtoli after this deadly inferno. This is one side of the job that is

possible. But what to do about power transformers, that many people believe, exploded and caused the fire at Nimtoli and presence of chemical just added fuel to the fire. It is learnt there are about 8,000 such power transformers only in old Dhaka.

Within a few yards of my house at East Rampura, Dhaka, there is a power transformer that many times caused repeated short circuits, heavy sparks and wire burnt from overloading. Recently, DESA replaced it by a new one. After the Nimtoli incident many tenants of my building are seriously thinking to leave the flats. I believe, many in this city, especially where roads are narrow and buildings are too congested, will face the same problem. The power distribution authorities must do something to address this concern centring the power transformers.

Engr. Md. Aminul Hoque
Khalishpur R/A, Khulna

1000mw of electricity.

The professor from Jahangirnagar University was, unfortunately, way off base in his ideas. Renovation of old and inefficient power plants will not be wise, and it will never be cost effective. In any case, before the new power plant comes on line, the old one has to be taken off-line for maybe at least 18 months, if not more. Retro-fitting, in any case, is always a costly and time consuming work.

I wonder, why none of the learned professors suggested the U-238 fuelled nuclear power plants for Bangladesh! The technology is established and it is absolutely safe having no radiation hazard! In fact it is operated in some US universities for training nuclear power engineers! There are many such plants, commercially operating in Germany, Spain, South Africa and China! In fact China is now putting up a 400MW U-238 based nuclear power plant!
Engr. S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Football fever

The whole world is now shivering with World Cup football fever. People are supporting different teams.

It is no doubt a symbol of universal brotherhood and equality.
AHM Akash
Natore Govt High school
Natore

Menacing trucks

In Sylhet city, at daytime, hundreds of trucks move recklessly through the main roads. Certainly, it's very risky for city dwellers, especially the school going children and their guardians. At least after the unanticipated death of a BUET student, the authorities should be more careful in this area. For example, From Kumargoan bus-stand to Amberkhana point (only in four kilometres) there are many educational institutions like Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Ragib-Rabeya Medical College and Hospital, BDR school, Sylhet Ideal School and College, Muslim Model School, West Point School and College, Pathantula Primary and High school, Blue Bird school and so on.

Thousands of people move through this main road with their kids. The movement of heavy trucks during daytime on this road makes us scared. The drivers are very audacious and they don't bother about

the other vehicles on the street.

SMP should circulate an immediate order to stop such movement of trucks during daytime.
Md. Abdul Hamid
Assistant Professor
Dept. of Business Administration
Shahjalal University, Sylhet

Tobacco cultivation

While the whole world is aware of the harmful impact of tobacco and tobacco related products, here in our country cultivation of tobacco is increasing day by day. Initially, cultivation of tobacco was confined to greater Rangpur. But, now it has spread in most areas of our country that is very detrimental for our food security, health, environment and socio-economic stability. For cultivation of tobacco very fertile land is needed and tobacco plants take away a huge quantity of nutrients from top soil. As a result, the land becomes unsuitable for cultivation of any agricultural crop for next two years.

In our country, 40 thousands hectares of land is being used for tobacco cultivation which is a threat to our food security.
Abdullah Al Mamun
Student
Institute of forestry and environmental sciences
Chittagong University

Rajuk and developers

If we look at the buildings of Dhaka city, it becomes evident that these were not constructed according to the building code. I have hardly seen 8 feet (4 feet from either side) distance between two houses which is a rule set by RAJUK. Hundreds of thousands of buildings have been constructed illegally but RAJUK did not take any action against the people who made them and claim that they do not have sufficient manpower. To me this is a lame excuse because it takes 2 to 5 years to construct a multi-storied building. If RAJUK has 20 engineers they should have sufficient time to inspect them (at least the distance between two buildings). Experts repeatedly warned that if there is insufficient space between the buildings, fire may spread from one house to another. See what happened at "Nimtoli" of Dhaka city. A building collapsed at "Begunbari" as it was not

constructed following the code.

On the other hand, developers are also trying their best not to keep any tree in any house and practically there is no window in the houses of Dhaka city. If the distance between houses is so narrow the purpose of keeping windows is not served.

If a medium level earthquake occurs in Dhaka city I guess many buildings would collapse leading to deaths of hundreds of thousands of people because RAJUK allowed buildings which did not and are not following the code necessary to resist earthquake. I do not believe the authorities concerned (especially the high officials of RAJUK) will think about the matter seriously and that is why I would urge the government to close this organisation. I am a taxpayer and RAJUK people get salaries from my tax and nobody is there to take action against them i.e. evidently they are above law.

Hence, I do not want to pay tax for some extremely irresponsible people.
Dr. M. Mahboob Hossain
Associate Professor
Department of Pharmacy
Northern University
Bangladesh
Dhaka

Undermining Islam

At present anti-Islamic forces of the world are trying to offend Muslim Ummah in multiple ways. They have already adopted Internet as a medium to pour scorn on Islam and propagate false, baseless information about the religion. Even they are opening many a website in the name of Islam and trying to create confusion about Islam among those Muslims who have little knowledge of it.

For instance, the mysterious website www. religion of peace.com can be mentioned here. A couple of days back, I visited this website. It is surprisingly true that whoever will first visit this website will get confused whether this is an Islamic one or not.

This really happened to me. First, I reckoned that this website would be Islamic and I would come to know a lot regarding Islam. But the reality was different.

The enemies of Islam have taken up Internet as a medium to undermine Islam and Muslims.

M Faisal Saleh
Chunati Hakimia
Kamil (MA) Madrasa
Lohagara, Chittagong

GDP and progress

To be graduated as a middle-income state within 2021, Bangladesh needs to increase its GDP growth to nearly about 8 percent. But at present it is hovering around 5.5 percent which is lower than the level predicted by our finance minister. Some factors are closely linked to increase or decrease of the GDP growth rate. Investment is an important factor. Investment is also interlinked with some fac-

tors like political atmosphere, infrastructure, power & energy.

Though the government allocates funds for infrastructure upgrading, but it has so far produced no tangible results. Better performance is needed in this respect.

Liton Roy

Development workers

CNRS & Maxwell Association

Sukh-santir Bazar, Gaibandha



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