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A good decision

We heartily thank Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for backing the recovery of grabbed rivers and lands. We learned that in a cabinet meeting on June 21 2010, the PM assigned seven ministers to implement the Detailed Area Plan through building favourable public opinion and holding inter-ministerial meetings.

People are behind her for this move, day-by-day Dhaka is becoming uninhabitable, if nothing is done immediately we will have to face dire consequences. We are astonished to learn that the government is facing challenges from inside in implementing the plan.

How could land developers become so bold that they do not hesitate to pressurize the state minister for housing and public works and Rajuk officials to relax the rules? We have seen on the television how they behaved with the minister, it is shameful and we loathe their attitude.

The government must not bow down to the pressure of the land grabbers, who for their selfish purpose are opposing the government plan. People are behind the government on this issue and we hope they will not be disappointed.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong



AMADULL HUQ / DRINKNEWS

Resisting hartal

A few days earlier the DS ran an editorial on government's reported plan to ban hartal. The paper feared promulgation of such a law would be counter-productive. Newspapers in Bangladesh reported that the AL was planning to resist the 27 June hartal.

It is true that the pro-hartal activists have no right to hinder the anti-hartal activists and compel them to observe hartal, but the hartal callers have no other choice but to resort to using some sort of force to make it a success. The AL also used this tool to stop the BNP from holding an engineered election on 22 January 2007.

Shafiqul Islam, NY

A library in bad shape

We mix up library with bookshops. We call our university library "a library" and a bookshop also "a library." An institution's library is storehouse of knowledge with some rules.

I'm a student of Saadat university college, Karatia, Tangail. Having got admitted to this institution, I experienced something different. The library runs without any facility. It is a two-storied building. But the first floor always remains closed. There is a BIG lock hanging from the door. The library doesn't have as much books as this should have. The librarian is not always available. There are only four reading tables for around sixteen thousand students. Students have their library card but they can't borrow their chosen books as those are not available there.

I'm requesting the college authorities to take care of the matter and help us use the library.

Anamika Sutradhar
English Dept.
Saadat University College
Karatia, Tangail

Referee's faults

An interesting article on the subject was published in a local English daily on 25 June. It reiterated the resistance of FIFA to improving the standard of refereeing, and making it more error free. In contrast, the referral system with the third umpire in cricket, has greatly reduced the chances of errors in taking close and marginal decisions. Why cannot the same system be introduced in football? FIFA needs to wake up from its deep sleep on the matter!

Football too should have a referral system so that a third referee gives the decision, based on instant TV replays. However, since there may be many infringements, as football is a very fast and dynamic game, the number of referrals may be limited to three for each team, a total of maximum six referrals in a match. May be this will add another 15 minutes to the game. However, that advantages are

far more than the little extra time taken, which happens when penalty shoot-outs are needed.

FIFA must seriously consider this rational option. If needed, like hockey, they too can consider having two referees and four linesmen, so that one set of referee and two linesmen control each half of the football pitch.

This will improve the standard and accuracy of decisions in the game, and both players and the fans will appreciate it.

S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Hartal returns

Bangladesh is returning to the traditional destructive political culture of hartal with the BNP's June 27 hartal. Yes! Hartal is a democratic right of opposition political parties against the party in power to warn them up for their activities or policies. But hartal is the most heinous and destructive way of protest. They are convincing people that they are calling hartal for the sake of countrymen. But the reality is completely different. They are calling hartal to achieve their own political goals. Actually they cannot harm the government but our country and general people are the ultimate sufferers. It poses a serious threat to our economy. Our major political parties promised that they would not call hartal, but just after losing in election they forget their promise. This hypocrisy of our big two political parties pollutes our political environment.

Political dialogue between the party in opposition and the party in power and pure patriotism can save us from the worst sufferings caused by hartals.

Noruddin Mohammad Burhan
Dept. of Political Science
University of Dhaka

Sanctions on Iran

The UN Security Council adopted a Resolution on June 9, 2010 slapping another round of sanctions on Iran for its refusal to surrender its right to develop nuclear fuel for peaceful needs. Iran is a signatory of NPT that allows it to develop nuclear fuel for peaceful purpose but the West, headed by the USA, has been accusing Iran of developing a nuclear bomb. But so far, Iran has succeeded in enriching uranium up to only 5% to enable itself to use it for power generation. Iran is far away from becoming a nuclear power, as uranium is required to be enriched up to 90% to make a nuclear weapon.

This new sanction is an extension of the past ones and is an attempt to squeeze Iran economically and politically in order to compel it to surrender to the evil wishes of the big powers led by the USA. There is no doubt that Iran has been

defiant all along and continued with uranium enrichment programme on the ground that it has the equal right like others to pursue this programme. On the other hand, Israel, a non-NPT signatory, is a terrorist state having a nuclear arsenal and getting full support in all respects to continue its crime against the innocent people of Palestine and never honours or obey any resolution of the UN which is again working as the rubber stamp of the big powers.

Probably, the biggest fault of Iran is that it is a Muslim nation. Iraq, having the second highest oil reserve, has been successfully destroyed as its leader Saddam Hossain tried to disobey his foreign master. Afghanistan is going to have the same fate as some enthusiastic young people tried to turn it to an Islamic state. Can anyone say where this game of the lone super power will end?

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

Exporting manpower

We have a long legacy of being deceived by the overseas employers. Main reason as I find is the low job skill and poor foreign language proficiency of the workers.

As we have huge manpower, we do not have any other option but to export this manpower and earn foreign exchange. So why do not we try it in a better way?

Canada has vast land and less people. It has a proactive programme for importing skilled workers in certain specific job areas.

Bangladesh can grab this unique opportunity. But for that, some effective measures must be taken. The existing vocational training institutes can be upgraded and accredited with Canadian standards. For that, the curriculum, course design and syllabus have to be entirely updated. Accreditation of these institutes should be done with the Canadian authorities. A Bangladesh government delegation can meet Canadian authorities to get an idea about it. If these institutes can be accredited by Canada they will be accepted all over the world.

Language is a concern for these workers. Since manpower export is one of our main focuses, I think different foreign language can be taught from primary levels or new foreign language schools can be opened with foreign collaboration (grant/aid etc) at even upazila levels.

If we can achieve the above in a planned way, the chances of being deceived by the foreigners as well as local employers/manpower agencies can be reduced to a large extent.

Kazi Nasim Ahmed
Toronto
Canada

Hospital in Texas

Yesterday I had the opportunity to visit Texas Children's Hospital. I just cannot refrain from sharing my experience with the readers of my favourite daily. This is not meant for those who have had such an experience.

After entering the hospital, it seemed to me we have entered into a children's theme park. The lady at the reception, took only a few minutes to check with the documents and handed over an electronic signalling device and asked us to wait in the lobby. Meanwhile the twin sons of my host friend began playing in the theme park. After a while, a middle aged gentleman and a lady entered into the lobby with a cart full of toys for free distribution among those children who have come for treatment, one each. Just as the two kids of my friend were choosing their toys from the lot, the electronic device began blinking.

I followed my friend along with his two kids through the lobby into a hall way and we were received there by the waiting nurse. She asked us to follow her into the examination room, after conducting the necessary examinations, she then took us into the doctor's examination room.

The doctor was not there and we kept waiting, after a while the doctor came in. This is for the first time in my 50+ years I have come across an American doctor. I was pretty much surprised by the way he greeted his little patients of 6 years, as if he was their friend.

While merry making with the kids he finished his job, I was absolutely dumbfounded. If this is what a doctor is then I am sorry to say that the doctors we across back in Dhaka are nothing better than a butcher.

For a while I went back in time, when renowned Professor B Chowdhury used to be a doctor. My late father used to take us to his chamber in Maghbaraz when we were little kids in the mid 60's for necessary treatments. It seemed to me that we have gone back instead of going forward. Since then many fanciful hospitals have come up but look at the treatment patients get at these hospitals not to speak of the government run facilities. While the rest of the world is moving forwards our beloved country Bangladesh is going backwards.

Saleh M Ayub
Houston, Texas, USA

Hartal's success

Hartal is an undemocratic process of exercising the democratic rights of a political

party. Perhaps, it can be justified if the reasons of calling a hartal are purely to protest the government's policies adversely affecting the common people, or the government's unwillingness to listen to the opposition. It can however never be justified if the reasons of calling a hartal include testing the power of the adversaries or to energize the party and its workers.

On June 27, 2010, Dr. Mosharraf Hossain told the press that he was glad the hartal was a success, and the reasons of calling such a hartal included the plan to energize the party and its workers. I appreciate his candid confession of this 'truth'. But I expected the pressmen present at the news conference to probe this a little more in detail, but obviously that did not happen.

This confession seems pretty casual but has deep implications.

In the western press, such a confession would have been a 'kiss of death'.

Mahmud Hassan
New Jersey, USA

Attack on teachers

It has been reported that the leaders of the Chhatra League, the student wing of the ruling party, have roughed up the principal of the Govt. Bulbul College, Pabna, on the plea of not getting the 'quota' fulfilled (DS: 23.06.10).

Now admission trade is being considered more lucrative in addition to other activities. For the noble cause, they earlier beat schoolteachers, college professors and now they have come down heavily on the Govt. College Principal! Bravo! Who is the next, our goldensons?

Kash Shah
Purana Paltan
Dhaka

Everest hero

Recently, I read a wonderful suggestion by Sir Frank Peters that the Government of Bangladesh should honour and indelibly inscribe its mountain-conquering hero Musa Ibrahim through the special issue of postage stamp, but I've not heard or read any official response.

Is the government too incompetent, too indifferent, or simply lacks the vision of Sir Frank to see the many tangible and intangible benefits the entire nation and its people would gain from bestowing such a befitting honour?

Let's face facts, Bangladesh is not carpeted wall-to-wall with modern-day heroes, role models for our youth, or people who ooze inspiration, as India does. Our cricket team



ADNAN / DRINKNEWS

Population boom

According to a UN study, Bangladesh's total population now exceeds 160 million bringing forth one newborn baby in every 11 seconds. The density of population in Bangladesh is now four times higher than India and eight times higher than China. According to press briefing by the Project Director of Population Science Department of Dhaka University, the increased population is causing massive pressure on limited resources and reducing the per capita wealth. The country's population is increasing by two million every year with a projection of reaching 220 million by 2021. About 30 percent of the total population of the country is below 15 years, which is very alarming due to the fact that this section of population will gradually enter into the reproductive age. Increased population is not only putting pressure on cultivable land but also on other productive and service

sectors including housing, education, health and nutritious food. The Project Director suggested considering the increased population as a "demographic bonus" and called for special attention for their education and training to build the section as human resources. Special measures should be taken from the highest level for efficient management of the population.

The decision of the government to promote the two-child norm is a step in the right direction to check population explosion. There has been a differential growth in Bangladesh's population. The high fertility rate among rural families and among certain communities in both rural and urban areas should be brought down in the interest of the social and economic development of the country.

Gopal Sengupta
Canada

fails us continuously and our Music, TV and Film industries churn out stars of no international consequence.

So when someone like Musa Ibrahim explodes from obscurity onto the scene and catapults Bangladesh into world focus, the government should embrace the rare opportunity and do all in its power to make the best of it. A foreigner visionary sees that, why can't they?

Let's not hesitate any longer and simply do what is right and just and good for Bangladesh.

Aquib Rahman
Farmgate, Dhaka

A question

Since Channel 1 and the daily Amar Desh have been shut down by the government, we have watched and heard huge demonstrations from the

professional sympathizers and the political mentors. This will continue for some time till a positive decision comes from the government or the court of law to reopen these media outlets.

If we look at the opposite side, we can definitely seek neutral opinion about the wrong doings by these two units-- shut down without any cause or for violation of media ethics?

Who should we expect to give us the total picture?

Quadir
California, USA

Eco-friendly football!

Soccer fans around the world were ironing out their jerseys and fishing out the face paint in preparation for the long awaited World Cup. These days, the grass isn't the only thing going green on the soccer field. Green innovations are sprouting up across the globe, from clean energy soccer balls to county wide greening competitions. There are two large 'green' projects that have been focused on for the event. These projects, along with others, were funded by the Global Environment Fund, who donated US\$ 1 million. The first was to green all the lighting in and around the stadiums with solar panels. Twelve billboards, along with 60 traffic lights and 78 streetlights switched to solar power.

The second is the Green Passport, an initiative to encourage visitors to make 'green' choices while in the country. The Green Passport is a 32 page booklet distributed to 100,000 World Cup spectators. Work it out - that's 320,000 pages of paper being distributed to spectators who are there to watch a game.

The host of this year's tournament, South Africa, has kicked off their own greening efforts, planting thousands of trees across the nation to counteract the estimated increase in carbon emissions due to the rise in domestic and international flights. Players and fans alike showcase the latest and greatest in sporting fashion this year, sporting eco-friendly shirts made from 100% recycled materials. Teams from Brazil, Portugal and the Netherlands toted Nike Jerseys made from plastic bottles found in landfills.

Finally, we should not forget our responsibility as global citizens. Let us all work to achieve a greener world for everyone!
Tanha Kashfia Kate
Uttara Model Town, Dhaka

Exploitation

The garment industry is one of the major export oriented businesses in our country. The contribution of this sector to our GDP is colossal.

Labour and political turbulence makes this sector a vulnerable one. The owners discriminate in offering labour wages. They exploit the labour. Employees are treated as a resource in any thriving business enterprise. Things must improve here in our context.

Raju Kumar Das
Dept. of Business Administration
Shah Jalal University of Science & Technology, Sylhet

High price of chicks

Hatchery owners have been charging very high prices of chicks for the last couple of months and that pushed poultry egg and bird prices exorbitantly high. As a consequence, thousands of SME poultry farms could not make sustainable profit and a good number of those are facing closer. We have been observing for a few months that a handful of hatchery owners who invested heavily, in connivance with one another, are charging Tk70.00 for a chick.

In fact, if business ethics is followed the price of a chick should not be more than Tk 20.00.

Md. Ashraf Hosain
Ramna, Dhaka

Murdered by mother

I am appalled going through the two news items-- children killed by their mothers. Situations in the two cases are different but the common phenomenon remains the same. Children were killed by their mothers. In the triple suicide case, the mother not only induced her children to commit suicide, rather supplied them with deadly poison. Her monstrous husband and in-laws have committed a heinous crime. But does it allow a mother to annihilate her children? In our society she was not the first woman abandoned by the husband. Many such poor mothers reared their children with utmost care and established them in life.

The other case is so shameful that I hate to discuss it in detail. Our social leaders, thinkers and researchers should go deep into the mindset of mothers who for carnal pleasure can kill their son. When mothers turn killers, where will our children take refuge in times of crisis?

M. Sanaul Huq
Uttara, Dhaka

Climate change



LITON RAHMAN / DRINKNEWS

Global climate changes are posing a major challenge to Bangladesh, due to accelerated rise in sea level, storm impacts, loss of coastal wetlands & biodiversity. Coastal states & low lying islands are especially vulnerable to climate change induced sea level rise, since most of the land area is less than one meter above the sea level. According to some studies, a 45cm sea level rise by 2070 would submerge about 11% & one meter sea level rise will submerge 21% of the coastal lands including nearly 75% of Sundarbans mangrove forests. This will fuel wood crisis & immense loss of biodiversity.

In case of submergence, migration of people to uplands would cause increased demand for food, energy & housing. Loss of agriculture land would exacerbate loss of input, income & employment. I think the adverse impacts of sea level rise can be minimized through implementing

following strategies:

- 1) Delineation impacts of high-risk zone, update the available data.
- 2) Collection of mean sea level rise data for a long period.
- 3) Strengthening of the network for prediction, tackling & monitoring system for tropical cyclones.
- 4) Enhancing awareness on the vulnerability to sea level rise & other climate changes.
- 5) Upgrading existing new dykes, enhancement of flood control measures through coastal shelter programmes & coastal afforestation.
- 6) Encouraging a participatory involvement of the local population in the coastal development & resource management activities.

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