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Elevated expressway

The government has decided that Dhaka city will have elevated expressway from Narayanganj to Hazrat Shahjalal Airport touching all important points within the city to reduce traffic jam. Everyone should welcome this decision. This is a good proposal to solve the public transport problem. We have very limited road link compared to the standard cities of world. In general this will be constructed over the existing main roads having columns on the middle of roads, so paying compensation for acquiring new land will be minimum.

We have steel, cement factories and sources of stone chips within our country. Moreover, some firms have concrete mixer carrying transports, so it will be easy to carry concrete mixer.

Casting can be done at night so that work will be quick without traffic jam.

It will be highly appreciated if the designers consider having two tracks on the same column top. Each trip will carry around 60-100 passengers in 2-3 compartments at best. But monorail should be available at an interval of 10 minutes from each direction.

To pass passengers from one direction monorail to another monorail of opposite direction one must get upstairs to pass overbridge from one side of a station to the other side to catch the monorail of opposite side. So each station will have two-storied buildings, first floor for elevated track and second floor for crossing track.

Engr. Azizul Huq
Panthopath, Dhaka



Capital punishment

I remember when I was a student at the Dhaka University, we had to learn "Functional English". There was a piece where the writer discussed the prison sentences and questioned whether providing facilities there would encourage people to go there and what would deter the criminals from committing crimes. In his famous book, "The Great Train Robbery", Late Michael Crichton also discussed these in some details. I think it was Bryce Ciurtenay who had written about England and how the English rulers tried to get rid of the criminals by deporting them.

Well, it was possible at that time, not now. I guess one has to rethink this scheme of punishment. So far no corrective solution has been found.

Here in Bangladesh, there are jail sentences for theft, robbery, throwing acids and thousands of other offences. But has it served any purpose? Either the criminals have obtained bail, or somehow managed to escape jail sentences through other means. I mentioned bail because there are number of instances when those criminals came out and murdered the witnesses.

In order to avoid all these, I think capital punishment is the only solution. Even that may not deter the criminals, but at least society will be safer.

Ranjan Chowdhury
Distillery Road, Dhaka

Question leakage

This refers to the news report regarding a section of government employees who had allegedly leaked question papers. They used an innovative method to supply question papers to the candidates they had an agreement with. Intelligence warning on such leakage plot led to police action. While the Intelligence Bureau should be commended for sounding an alarm just five days before the question leakage from the Bangladesh Government Press in Rangpur, it is remarkable that the police were able to take cognisance of the warning and act on it. In view of the fact that the leakage occurred long time earlier, the information from the IB should have been given proper importance and adequate precautions taken.

The report makes disturbing reading. Why should it bother about the views of only one section of the people? Should the government not be held responsible for the mess? Even though the success of the intelligence and security wings of the police cannot be denied, the entire blame

cannot be placed on them every time. The common people have to play a greater role if such incidents are to be averted in the future. The question leakage and previously employed government employees from police to civil administration highlighted two major lapses: political interference in matters where professionalism should be the chief determinant of action; and, the policy of selective recruitment of personnel on a low-scale to reduce non-plan expenditure. Both have proved disastrous. No government can afford to be complacent in matters of security and compromise on the safety of the government document leakage and people's sufferings, wittingly or unwittingly. While such leakage strikes have become fairly common, the condemnation and appeals for calm by politicians cum policymakers of all hues seem to be following the same pattern. The problem can only be tackled by strict action, proper awareness among the citizens, and their total cooperation.

A point being missed by most is that no normal specification attributed to human beings can be suitable for a culprit. No human rights can be applicable to them. There is no point in crying hoarse about the menace unless we are ready to deal with it the way it should be dealt with. The public is accustomed to the notion of intelligence failures, but most of them have not been intelligence failures at all. Intelligence agencies historically have done their utmost to provide intelligence information to decision-makers, who have had the ultimate authority to decide whether or not to act on such information. The record indicates that a vast majority of the so-called intelligence failures were really intelligence successes, in that the intelligence agencies did their jobs of informing and instructing the policymakers. What made them failures was the fact that policymakers, for a variety of reasons, rejected the intelligence information or, while accepting intelligence information, did not act on the information in a timely manner or at all.

Gopal Sengupta
Canada

Ramshackle vehicles

The drive against 20 years old vehicles running on the city's most busy routes is welcome. The DS and other dailies gave a shabby picture of transportation several times but nothing has been done.

The authorities concerned have to address the issue in right earnest. Engr. M. Helal Uddin
Eastern Refinery Limited
North Potenga, Chittagong

Ethics in entrepreneurship

The lecture at NSU by Samson H Chowdhury (Chairman of Square group) on Ethics in entrepreneurship (published in the Daily Star of 27/5/10) is a welcome diversion from the usual stuff we read in the print media in Bangladesh.

Our political leaders avoid talking on this topic (ethics and morality); hence it is not surprising that Bangladesh ranks as one of the top corrupt nations in the world. The definition of public service is distorted before the public microphones. Today the civil service is corrupt (and politicised); and it is almost impossible to get proper counter services quickly; without entering through the backdoors.

This is the usual have-not mentality in any underdeveloped country, due to lack of quality top leadership. The fear of losing post and authority reigns supreme among the public servants. Due to lower standard of living, it is easier to woo the voters, as the latter have no holding power.

The very political base or foundation is not ethical, hence raising superstructures on such narrow foundations have a long time lingering effect on the morale of society. Now politics in controlled by two dynasties. This creates a negative umbrella effect on the political followers, who turn to sycophancy, to gain advantages through the backdoors. We are prisoners of our own making. It means we get the leadership we deserve!
A Husnain, Dhaka

Linkroad

Since the beginning of the monsoon this year, I was cursing the Mayor of Dhaka and the contractor for doing nothing since it started constructing a small connecting bridge on such an important road that is Tejgaon-Gulshan link road. I am thankful to your newspaper for publishing a report on such an important issue of public concern. It seems that there is nobody to oversee things when it comes to the DCC and its redundant Mayor.

Dhaka has not seen any major maintenance or repair works at least during the last five years, if not more!!
M.F. Hussain
Gulshan, Dhaka

English medium education

A lot of English medium schools are available in Dhaka city like video shops but who are the teachers over there and what's their qualification?

The issue needs to be addressed. Md Zahidul Islam
LLB Final Year
Bangabandhu Law College
Dhaka

Railway services

The prime minister and her cabinet colleagues do often speak about development of the railways along with new railway lines including raising single tracks to double tracks. Even during the PM's visit to Malaysia and South Korea such utterances were made and there was no exception while she was opening a flyover or laying foundation of a flyover around Tongi.

I am sorry to remind the PM of her governance from 1996-2001, the railway services between Bagerhat and Khulna were totally closed down including uprooting of the railway lines. In my madrasa days around 1940, we did read in the general knowledge book that Barisal had no railway in the then Bengal, and that is true still today. Even during the great days of disparities, as preached, the railway line of Bagerhat-Khulna was transformed into broad gauge from narrow gauge tracks.

The government should look into the matter.
Mahbubar Rahman
Bagerhat

Deflation

In the great economic depression of the late 20's and 30's, they had no economic guarantees on wages. The auto business was one of the first places where people cut their spending, because it's a luxury to buy a new car.

It was a vicious cycle, a downward spiral that just couldn't stop, and industry kept cutting prices to where people could afford to still buy. This was the deflation. Inflation at home mostly hurts the rich, but it mostly helps the poor, except for those who are on set incomes, like pensions. That's why the rich are trying to bring about deflation. The very rich, however, profit from the deflation, because their dollars grow in value even though they're doing nothing with them.

We're on a crash course to bankruptcy again, but they think they're going to patch it all up instead of curing the disease: which is that they're hanging onto their riches instead of putting them into circulation. In the past, deflation and depression have frequently led to a vicious circle of nationalism, xenophobia, the disintegration of states, and even war which is happening today.

Ted Rudow III, MA
One-mail

PM disappoints us

We learned that a four-hour long meeting of the Awami League Central Working Committee was held at the Gono Bhaban on July 16, 2010. Prime Minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina and many high-ups of the ruling Awami League were present at the meeting.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said she was making a list of people in Bangladesh Chhatra League who were involved in incidents of violence across the country and

those people would be arrested soon.

Reading the news this far, I was feeling very happy, thinking at last Chhatra League and Jubo League would be dealt with strongly and people would get respite.

But no surprise was waiting for me, at the end of the news item it has been written that a few leaders spoke about the unruly Chhatra League, Jubo League and party men and urged the premier to take tough action. Hasina responded by saying the members of Islami Chhatra Shibir and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal had intruded into Chhatra League and they are responsible for the recent incidents of violence across the country.

So what is the outcome of the meeting? A big zero. The activists of the ruling party will become more daring knowing that their misdeeds will be pinned upon Islami Chhatra Shibir and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, they will remain unscathed.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong

Negative thinking

There are politicians who dream of the day when they will come to power and plan in advance what misdeed and mischief they will do if people vote for them. This negative politics can do little good to society.

Dr Muhammad Shameem
Hassan
Mohakhali, Dhaka

Teachers' performance

Prof. Bais's appreciation for the introduction of teaching evaluation at JNU (published in Daily Star 18 July) is well placed. However, if I were him, I would brace myself for a few surprises and probably start thinking of ways to deal with them in advance; hence the reason for writing here.

In our youth when we were public university students, in addition to spending our time with studies, we had to conjure up quite a lot of efforts in trying to please our instructors. Grades did not come from work alone but from being able to apple polish some of the senior teachers; a few even required their praise to be sung and special services be offered at home. Matters at times went so far down as to withdrawal of published grades only to be revised again so that the teacher's pets were aptly rewarded. Even combined student protests at times could not get these usurpers off the campus, let alone their self-esteem urging them to step down they appeared to be omnipotent if not utterly shameless. It has been quite sometime we have left the scene of these unaccounted for abuses and looking back at those times, I do realize that if a system like teaching evaluation were installed in place, perhaps matters wouldn't go down thus far. However, while studying/teaching abroad

River erosion



QUDDUS ALAM / DRINKNEWS

River bank erosion has increased with the rise of water level in major rivers. The erosion wiped out villages, habitation, properties, cultivable land and threatened towns. In the mean time, there is severe erosion in Kurigram, Lalmonirhat and Brahmaputra. The erosion causes untold miseries to the affected people. This is happening year after year. But unfortunately there is no provision to rehabilitate them. So majority of the affected people migrate

to newly formed chars and start life afresh. Some turn beggars and rest move to towns for livelihood. In the process some fall prey to criminals.

In the proposed budget, provision for maintenance of 40km of new bank and 75km of erosion control has been made, this is too meagre compared to the gigantic problem.

Serajul Islam
Gulshan, Dhaka

and teaching at home, I have marked a clear difference in student culture and its impact on teaching and learning. Here I would make a generalization: I have seen students abroad come to universities out of a sincere desire to learn. In a majority of cases only the financially capable or those driven by an urge to improve upon their lives by educating themselves join universities. A large number of students work part-time and finance their own education. In contrast, as I can say for private universities, a majority of the students in Bangladesh are "sent" to universities by their parents who see the need for a degree certificate essential for a well-paid job. Note that it's not the student but parents who are motivated more. Therefore these students who have everything taken care of by their parents, show only half the motivation to educate themselves and hardly come anywhere close to making an effort at par with those who have to earn it the hard way. Soon this is reflected in the grade sheets, pressure from parents begins to build up and students start blaming their teachers. An instructor who grades liberally soon becomes the sought after one and the one scrutinizing strictly start losing students. Teaching evaluations soon turn out to be rewards from students for giving good grades the ones they can show to their parents at home. One would like to think that when the number of students is large the mean value or consensus would be more representative of true teaching standards. Unfortunately, I have seen a whole batch of students team

up to mark a teaching evaluation poor just to "teach the instructor a lesson" for being strict. In many cases, students who received poor grades from an instructor earlier routinely evaluated him as bad for subsequent courses. Having said that, this of course, does not mean that I intend to write off teaching evaluation as a failing system, but I want to stress that student attitude and education culture in Bangladesh is different from Western societies after which our education system (and teaching evaluation) is modelled.

We must take into account that adjustments need to be made so that wilful manipulation can be prevented to reflect a teacher's true performance.

Anonymous
Instructor in a private university

Cell phones in flight

No doubt, cell phone is a boon to our modern-day living. It helps us to keep in touch with nearest and dearest ones plus in maintaining important communications. But unfortunately the cell phone users often ignore safety codes. Recently, I witnessed in a Malaysia Airlines flight that in spite of repeated requests over microphone, quite a number of passengers continued using their cell phones. Many air-passengers are reluctant to appreciate the risk of operating cell phones particularly during take-off and landing because modern aircrafts are being digitally controlled. The cell phone signals may cause serious interference to aircraft's digital communication network and cause malfunctioning with errors.

I would suggest airline authorities to take some stringent measures to make passengers switch off their cell phones as per the airlines safety instructions.

Professor M Zahidul Haque
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University
Dhaka

Power generation master plan

This is about your Star Business Report of 15th July on the Round Table organised by the 'Energy & Power' magazine on its seventh anniversary. The main topic of discussion, was based on the government's recently published five year master plan on additional sources of power generation between the years 2010 to 2015. The key note paper however, presented a total generation in five years; of 9426 MW of power, from traditional energy sources which are natural gas, liquid fuel (diesel & furnace oil) and coal only. Three important major issues on this matter, which are critical for the power sector in Bangladesh connotation,

were unfortunately not covered in the keynote paper presented. These are: a) Nuclear Energy b) Alternative and Renewable Energy and finally c) Energy Efficiency.

During discussions on the keynote paper, the under-designed raised the issue of nuclear power plants, which in the government's plan represented 2100MW of power; through the usual U-236 fuelled power source. However, it was surprising that most experts present were not aware of the fact that U-236 based nuclear power is a no-go for Bangladesh. It seems that we are all banking on the proposed agreement with Russia for setting up our first nuclear power plant; in spite of their horrific nuclear accident in Chernobyl which is known to all. There had been many more radiation related fatal accidents, both direct and through cooling water leakages, in the then USSR nuclear power plants. These were forcefully suppressed by the then totalitarian communist government of those days! I wonder how we are going ahead with the most unreliable and unsafe nuclear power plant makers in the world, given our dense population, critical water resources and our lack of common industrial discipline and safety attitudes!

For Bangladesh however the U-238 based nuclear power reactors, commonly known as "Pebble Bed" reactors, with no radiation hazard is the sure and safe method for having a number of nuclear power plants in Bangladesh.

Since these power plants are built up in modules of 10 to 20 MW, and are usually limited from 100 to 150 MW capacity per plant. These can be set up in our large cities like Chittagong, Sylhet, Rajshahi and Khulna, without any need of containment areas or other safety constraints of a U-236 power plants; where even the disposal of used nuclear fuel involves strict safety and protection regimes; which is not needed for disposing the spent pebbles of U-238 nuclear fuel! This is the sure and safest and environmentally very clean source of power generation; ideal for overcrowded Bangladesh!

This not only can save power from the grid, but it also reduce the cost of production, by decreasing power consumption substantially. To encourage this, the government should provide easy financing and duty free availability of retro-fit drive kits for industrial electric motors.

Can we afford to ignore this tremendous practical source of more power now available from our existing power grids by improving energy efficiency of our conventional electric devise with simple modification?
Engr. S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Spain's triumph



Eventually Spain won the splendid trophy of FIFA 2010 Football Championship for the first time in the World Cup history at Soccer City, Johannesburg on the night of Sunday July 11.

Spain's Andres Iniesta scored the stunning goal.

In the FIFA World Cup 2010, Spain was the favourite and deserved the FIFA 2010 Championship trophy. In

the Final game of World Cup 2010 Spain dominated over the Netherlands in the 120 minutes.

Spain has proved that 'success is all about consistency around fundamentals.' Congratulations Spain, on your greatest victory!!

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