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National budget



KAKOLI PRODDA N / DRINKNEWS

After our independence the first national budget for the financial year 1972-1973 presented by then Finance Minister Tajuddin Ahmed amounted to Taka 786 crore only. Today in 2010-2011 financial year our national budget stands at Tk. 1,32,170 crore. Is it not a colossal, ambitious and challenging budget?

We would request our learned Finance Minister AMA Muhith to let us know what steps he has taken in the light of his budget for the year 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 to fulfil the pledge of the Awami League government for "Din Badaler Pala" and Digital Bangladesh 2021.

Since the Awami League government came to power after winning a massive election victory we do not find any "Din Badaler Pala"-Charter of Change, any Digital Bangladesh. We find ourselves in the mist of "As it is, where it is" of the past rule of BNP govt. followed by caretaker govt. some years ago. In some cases the sufferings and hardships of the common people

have increased. The rich are getting richer and the poor are becoming poorer. The income, salary and luxury of the rich and affluent persons, political leaders of the govt. and opposition, bureaucrats, industrialists, traders and contractors have increased. They are spending more and more money on construction and renovation of their new and old houses, purchasing cars, air-conditions, electric generators, IPS, many luxurious items, visiting foreign countries and what not. Whereas the poor and middle class people are struck with price hike of essential goods, commodities and services, their housing, education and medical expenses of their children and family members, acute shortage of electricity and load shedding problems.

We understand that our government is contemplating and undertaking many giant development projects like Padma Bridge, underground railway, expressway, flyovers, widening Chittagong-Dhaka highway and so and so

forth. We however feel that our most important and immediate requirement is adequate supply of electricity and total avoidance of lead shedding. This problem should be solved by our govt. on top priority basis considering our colossal financial losses in trade, commerce, industry, education of our children, office works etc. etc.

We are disappointed and shocked that we could not watch/listen the full text of budget speech of our Finance Minister AMA Muhith in our Jatiya Sangsad over TV and radio due to electricity failure and frequent load shedding.

We need accountability and transparency of our all govt. expenditures, ban on misuse of public money, stoppage of illegal toll collection, bribe and corruption.

We demand that our national budget must be realistic, practical and people's welfare oriented.

OH Kabir
Dhaka

the main industry of our country. Also, they can begin to work in the various industries. But under no circumstance should we fail to understand that this exponential growth of rickshaws must be stopped, now. If we want to go anywhere in the near future, we simply have no choice but to control the rickshaws. Confusing people with complex statistical data (who knows where they come from, i.e. since x is not equal to y, therefore z is not equal to x) will not result in keeping rickshaws around. Banning rickshaws is the ultimate answer among many others.

Therefore, let us be supportive of the government initiative in creating a better, higher standard capital city of Dhaka where there will one day be no rickshaws except maybe in the museums.

Rahat
Malibag, Dhaka

City government

City fathers and city corporation election candidates pleaded for government under city corporation within their jurisdiction. As a city dweller we could see the city corporation failing to remove garbage all throughout Dhaka metropolis. Even Karwan Bazar kitchen market, built hardly two decades ago, is in a dilapidated shape as the floors have big cracks while main beams have cracks in many places which are now supported by props. Anything can happen like Begunbari, very close to Karwan Bazar.

I should be ashamed to describe the roads and surroundings of Karwan Bazar area, though at times foreigners do walk around and they should think whether to give aid or assistance!

Mahmud Ali
New Eskaton Road
Dhaka

Corruption at college

I am a student of a govt. college. It is very sad to note that employees of a govt. collage, who collect collage fees, are corrupt.

Sumon
Monipuripara, Dhaka

The city

Dhaka is celebrating its 400 years of age. It is recognized as the hub of tradition, culture, history, business and other aspects of Bangladesh. Nevertheless, to most people living in Dhaka, this is more popular as a city of misery, trouble and harassment. The question is 'which problems do not exist in Dhaka?' From a bird's eye view, it seems that these problems are quite unsolvable. Frequent outbreak of newer problems has become a normal thing in Dhaka. Numerous problems such as gas shortage, electricity and power shortage, alarming outburst of hijacker-'molo'-party, pick pocketing, traffic jam, human jam have become the day to day companions for the Dhaka dweller. Land grabbing and pollution of the Buriganga, Shitalakha, Turag have been adding to the miseries of the city dwellers. As per recent statistics, Dhaka remains within the top five polluted cities around the world.

It is important to keep in our mind that building a 'developed and modern Dhaka' is not only a responsibility of the govt. but also the people of the country.

Khondoker Rezwana Tanvir
Dept. of Business Administration
Shahjalal University of Science and Technology
Sylhet

Auto-bike

A new kind of tiny vehicle called 'Auto-bike' is seen plying on the roads in many regions of our country. This bike can carry six passengers at a time and it is totally harmless to the environment as it does not need any liquid fuel. It needs only electricity for charging its batteries.

A single unit of this bike costs Tk one lakh only. So, a middle income family can buy it and earn something from it. A large number of drivers can live on plying these bikes. I do not recommend giving the permission for running bikes on the main roads of this capital Dhaka due to traffic congestion. But where rickshaws are permitted to move in Dhaka, the bikes should be given permission. There should not be any restriction on running it in other regions of the country.

This kind of environment friendly vehicles should get proper patronage from the government along with other authorities concerned.

Rashid Harun
Dhaka

Corporal punishment

A society is best judged by the way it treats its children. The inhuman practice of corporal punishment not only results in grave injuries, often the victims succumb to the injuries. Many innocent souls get affected by Didaskale inophobia (fear of going to schools), thereby affecting their career adversely. There also exists a group of tortured children who are psychologically shattered or even resort to suicidal steps.

It is high time the teachers acted as true well-wishers of the students. Instead of overburdening them with homework and tests, teachers should inculcate morals and values among students. Weaknesses and faults of the children can be rectified not by rebuking or beating, but by counselling and a show of compassion. Unless the minds of the children are without fear, how can they hold their heads high?

Kajal Chatterjee
Peerless Nagar
Kolkata, India

Critically ill Doyel

A movie celebrity of our country, Doyel, who during her prime time delivered some superb performances, is suffering agonizingly from some incurable brain condition. As per news report, none have so far come in aid of the critically ill actress whose family is facing harsh financial constraints. After being operated upon and staying hospitalised for long nine months a bedridden, speechless Doyel has been brought back to home with continuation of treatment.

I would, in this context, extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and others for timely financial help to pop guru Azam Khan.

Would the Honourable Prime Minister, generous individuals and colleagues of ailing Doyel immediately provide some financial support?

If so, then that would give some relief to child artiste Dighi for her dear mother and to actor Subrata for her loving wife.

A cultural activist
Dhaka

An appeal to NU

I would request the authorities of the National University to publish the results of LL.B (part-1) examination by this month. It ended on 30 April'10. It may be mentioned that the results of the HSC examinations have already been published which the respective authorities took only 57 days to publish, and this is a very positive sign. Now, may I draw the kind attention of the NU authorities that if they can publish their results in such a short period, then

why the NU can't publish the same results by this month as our LL.B(part-1) examination started on 12th Mar'10 with the regular interval of seven days for each paper. Many students are leaving NU in the middle of their education session as their honours course of four years is taking up to seven years and two years LL.B course is taking four years! And they are again getting admitted in the private universities spending a lot of money to complete their student life.

The NU authorities cannot overlook all these developments.

Md Zahidul Islam
LLB Final Year (English Medium)
Bangabandhu Law College
Dhaka

Minimum wages

Why don't the garment manufacturers agree to the fact that it is they who undercut each other to get orders, thus destroying the industry by themselves. Giving out lame excuses of stiff overseas competition is an eye wash to avoid wage increases. Just two weeks back Hongkong had to revise minimum wages of workers when the workers revolted saying that they would no more accept excuses like bosses' plea of stiff overseas competition. About same time when the EU threatened that GSP of 9 percent to Sri Lanka will be withdrawn due to human rights violations there, the Sri Lankan President replied firmly that Sri Lanka is not interested in GSP. The country can face the market without GSP. It is the garment manufacturers in Bangladesh who are spineless and submit to buyers price offers and undercut each other as well. Minimum salary of RMG workers should be not less than Tk.4000.00 per month. On the other hand, BGMEA can request the govt. to bring down bank interest to a single digit rate on loans to exporters and give discount on other production related expenses.

Ziauddin Ahmed
Gulshan - 1, Dhaka

Religious extremists

In a column "The Pakistani-American conundrum," Dr. Syed Mansoor Hussain, a Pakistani American physician living in the US, wrote in Lahore's Daily Times on July 26 "Born-again Muslims and some of the recent immigrants have however adopted a style of Islam that is quite different from what many of us were used to while growing up in Pakistan. ... As a result we are seeing a dichotomy within the Pakistani-American community. The concept of a Pakistani culture is now being replaced for a segment of this group by an Arab-Islamist culture driven by religious extremism.

Unfortunately, this style of religion puts considerable emphasis on the concept of 'violent' jihad. The consequences of this evolving change in attitudes is sadly becoming manifest in rather tragic ways and influences the reputation of the community at large." In fact, this is what is happening in Pakistan where the Taliban are slaughtering fellow Pakistanis in the name of jihad.

It is said that if you live in a madhouse, you must behave like a madman to survive. In this sense, Pakistan is essentially a madhouse where everyone is up against everyone in the name of Islam. Sunnis are slaughtering Shias and vice versa. The Taliban are slaughtering Sunnis who don't share their interpretation of Islam. They have been bombing schools, hotels, hospitals and even mosques - all in the name of their brand of Islam. Recently, they bombed Sufi shrine of Data Darbar because they consider Sufism heretical. As Zaair Hussain, a columnist for Daily Times, wrote on July 23: "Sufism resonates with the human hearts in a way that no fascist can ever hope to replicate. It espouses inner strength, acceptance, charity, humility and the joy of the divine. It finds converts through love and not coercion, through charity rather than bribery. It breathes a living truth into the claim that Islam is a religion of peace, of tolerance, of love and learning, of devotion and divine. It is everything the Taliban are not."

It is time that Pakistani-Americans realise that the victims of Muslim extremism are Muslims themselves. They must come to their senses to understand that the Taliban are slaughtering fellow Pakistanis and Afghans who don't share their version of an exclusive and hateful Islam. Apologists in Pakistan seem not to realise that if the Taliban were successful in imposing their version of Islam, Pakistanis will be the biggest losers in the same way the Afghans suffered during the Taliban rule.

Pakistani-American community should wake up to the lethal danger the Taliban are posing to Pakistan and Afghanistan. Otherwise, both Pakistan and Afghanistan would become proverbial madhouses where everyone will be slaughtering everyone in the name of religion.

Mahmood Elahi
Ottawa, Canada

Mannan Bhuiyan

We have lost an icon of our political field. Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan was an energetic political figure.

The BNP has lost a great leader.

Rahad Jannatul Islam
Dept of Marketing
JNU

BNP-Jamaat

I have been making the point through my letters that the Jamaat and the BNP are desperate and there is widespread sabotage in the power sector. Even the Honourable Prime Minister has mentioned this. Now it has happened again. Three power units at Ghorashal have gone out of commission. Apparently, instead of producing 950 MW, it is now producing 300 MW, at least that is what the TV ticker (ETV) says. I feel it is sabotage, because I had predicted earlier that whenever the BNP and Jamaat go for agitation, there is always a problem, especially in the power sector.

I know that these plants are old, but definitely they go for maintenance, annually or temporarily, or even while running. Another thing that I read in the newspapers is that in the modern world all the plants are new, and these are old. Who told them that 1) the plants are not new, and some are older than the Ghorashal one. 2) Depreciation costs are usually deducted only to replace the machinery. Has this been done? And if not, why, and if yes, then why have not they replaced their 'age-old units'?

There should be thorough investigation and the culprits must be punished.

Ranjan Chowdhury
Distillery Road
Dhaka

For world peace

US support for Israel is for strategic reasons and US will never back out on Israel. No matter how much the world matter to scream, Israel will never give up Golan Heights or the occupied Palestinian land, including total control on Gaza and West Bank.

The war of 1967 proved clear enough that the supporters of Palestine, Arabs included, are totally impotent and failed to establish the rights of the Palestinians to their claim on the land. Egypt, Jordan and Syria chose to make peace with Israel.

Turkey, Iran & Libya are trying to show off as if they are champions of the Palestinian cause. It's just to fool their home crowd, we understand it all. Let common sense prevail and let the world come to terms with the reality.

Habib Rabbani
Shantinagar, Dhaka

Secular states

I hear many legal opinions that secularity is not possible with a State religion, faith in Allah and the starting words Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim. This of course is not true because Great Britain has a State religion and a State Church and a religious preamble to all legislations (as has the United States with its trust in God and Christianity) but

none of these hinder secularity in practice because this is a legal concept and not religious. Provided laws are brought in to prevent favouritism on the basis of religion, colour, or creed, or on any other basis, and everyone is given a fair and equal chance on jobs, education and other civic entitlements, on merit or other stipulated transparent criteria, then the country will be secular. If such laws are broken there should be heavy penalties imposed by courts for such non compliance. There is simply no conflict between practical secularity and religion and it is not necessary to stipulate that the country is secular in the Constitution either. Bringing in laws to enforce equality of entitlement is a practical guarantor of secularity as in the west.

Engineer Shafi Ahmed
London, UK

A right step

Finally, some measures are being taken by the government for curbing the ever increasing menace created by unruly rickshaws. I am pleased to see that the government is taking stern steps in managing the traffic system. Although there are number of other reasons that contribute to the terrible traffic gridlocks in our city, control and gradual elimination of rickshaws

from major city roads is inevitable.

I wanted to respond to Mr. Sikander Ahmed's (of Gulshan 1) May 17, 2010 letter entitled 'An appeal'. I respect his appreciation for the High Court's directives on some major issues. However, asking for intervention in favour of keeping rickshaws on Dhaka streets to let them roam free and take over each and every corner and block each and every intersection is simply outrageous. I am appalled to find that Mr. Sikander has thought that this could ever happen. I am sure that our judicial system is comprised of people who are forward thinkers and they see the logical solution. Mr. Sikander has mentioned that rickshaws are the fastest?? Perhaps, we should all then forget about all forms of modern transport systems which take us to our destinations in the shortest time possible and hop on an extremely dangerous form of transport that is operated by even more dangerous persons who have absolutely no care for anyone's safety and have no regard for traffic laws. As we gradually remove rickshaws from major roads of Dhaka, present rickshaw pullers will see that they need to find another form of income. They will eventually stop coming to Dhaka from their villages blindly and devote themselves towards agriculture which is

Definition of 'hartal'

It is very funny how the definition of 'hartal' changes with the change of the position of the political parties. When they form the government, hartal is defined as destructive politics, which hampers the development of the country and causes suffering to the people. So, it must shunned.

When in the opposition, hartal is a tool to protest against the government's failures and misrule, it is called for the sake of the people as they are facing many problems due to the inefficiency of the ruling government. The BNP gave a call for a peaceful hartal on July 27, 2010 and it could have passed peacefully but the Awami League government had other plans.

Police, Rab and Awami League activists swooped on the pickets and arrested a large number of BNP leaders. The protesters were physically abused with indiscriminate.

It is quite evident that in observing hartal and resisting it, the BNP is no match for the Awami League.



KALZEM / DRINKNEWS

We have seen in 2006 how the Awami League acted when it was in the opposition.

Now the Awami League is in power, their dealing with the opposition is objectionable. Awami League General Secretary, Syed Ashrafur Islam, said on June 27, 2010 that his party would not take responsibility of the activists of the Chhatra League who had allegedly attacked pickets at various places during the hartal. How absurd! Is it not the government's duty to see to it that no untoward incidents happen? how could it shrug off the responsibility? People are not at all happy by the government's attitude.

Nur Johan
Chittagong