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Tourism planning

The current tourism planning in Bangladesh, despite the potentiality, is yet to achieve satisfactory standards. If there were proper planning, reasonable level of development could have been achieved over the past years even with the government's meagre budgetary allocation.

The stereotyped tourism development in Bangladesh is only to create some facilities in the form of hotels, motels, restaurants etc. though those are not sufficient at all. This kind of planning does not involve local people in tourism development. Hence, the benefits do not cascade down to the local people. Tourism planning should be a bottom-up approach. The planners should build a good rapport and make them understand about the process. Sometimes some projects are initiated where local people are kept away.

Such projects that involve local people at the level of planning and monitoring should be initiated. In this regard some planning tools such as Social Mobilization (SM), Appreciative Participatory Planning and Action (APPA), Marketing and Development Tool (MAD), Enterprise and Social Services (ESS) may be considered. In Japan, the local government initiates all the tourism planning and the local people play the leading role in development of tourism attractions and resource conservation. This helps the development of sustainable tourism. Bangladesh may take such initiative in the tourism potential areas like Chittagong Hill Tracts, Netrokona haor area, Teknaf and in other charlands.

Ziaul Haque Howlader
DM, BPC

Population growth in Bangladesh

At present there is no extensive programme before us for population control. About one and a half decade ago the government and many NGOs used to work extensively all over Bangladesh on family planning programmes. This was a spontaneous movement. But now-a-days we do not get to see this programme anywhere in Bangladesh like in the past, though the government has been working on it through the ministry of family planning since 1965.

There are many government officers and workers who are working at the field level. Their duties are to make people conscious about birth control and also motivate them to use birth control measures regularly. But I think that the enthusiasm of the workers like before is no more.

Have we achieved Zero population growth? Not at all. Whatever was the growth rate twenty years back has now doubled. Even now the poor and the illiterate consider family planning measures a taboo. We will have to work very hard to control population growth for the sake of a better future.

Md. Iqbal Hossain
Zafrabad Sankor
Dhaka

Victim of PM's insensitivity

At last Sheikh Hasina has completed her mission successfully by removing Khaleda Zia from her house. I think it was the most important mission of her political life. She is a prime minister, but after all she is a woman. She cannot work for a country without listening to her heart, and if she has a heart, then how has she removed Khaleda from her home?

Sharmin
Uttara, Dhaka

Bailey bridge blunders!



PHOTO: STAR

Your Netrokona correspondent's report and the picture alongside, published on 10 November, about the collapse of the second bailey bridge within the last few days, should wake up the Roads and Highways Department to take some simple commonsense preventive measures.

Blaming irresponsible overloaded trucks is the easy way out; but prevention is better than cure; and this can be prevented! Why not post clear warning signs on either side of the road that only one loaded truck at a time can cross from either end. Also put guards on both sides, along with police personnel, to ensure that this actually is done. This should stop these accidents which are caused due to sheer negligence! One supervisor and at most twelve men

should cover both ends round the clock. At most this may cost sixty thousand taka per month, which comes to Tk.7.8 lac per month.

Can we not take this simple cost effective measure to ensure that traffic is properly regulated and the bridges are safe? The capital cost of replacing one such bridge, by removing the damaged one and putting another, will be easily above one crore taka, the interest on which comes to over eight lac taka annually! It will take us probably ages to implement this simple precaution; meanwhile we prefer to be penny wise and pound foolish.

Engr. S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Electricity price hike, again?

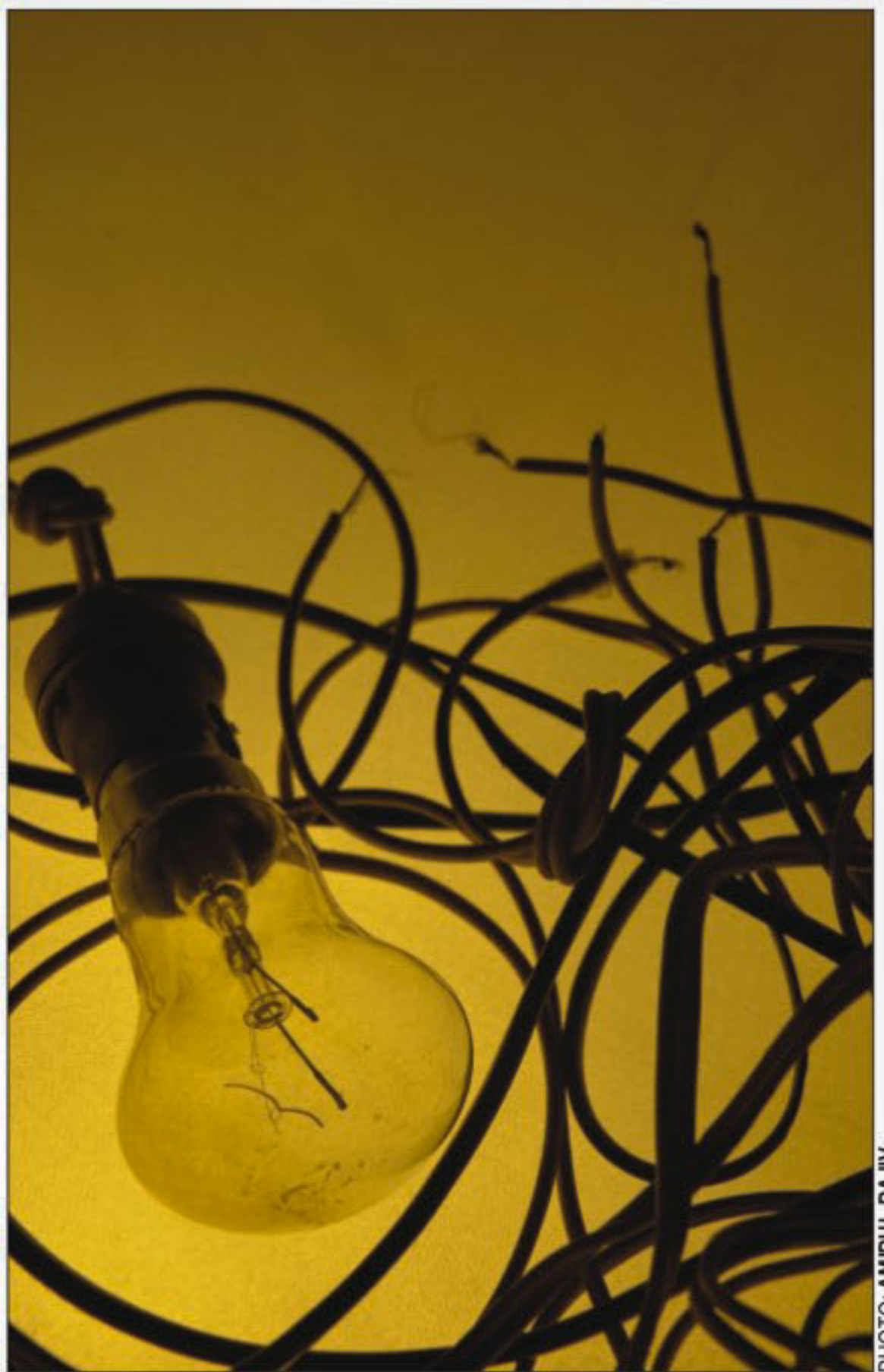


PHOTO: AMIRUL RAJIV

Only a few months ago the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) increased the electricity charges causing untold sufferings to the people when there are frequent electricity failure and load shedding all over the country. It is now learnt that BPDB has proposed Bangladesh Energy Regularity Commission to raise the multipurpose electricity tariff by 12 per cent.

We would like to state our opinion on payment of electricity bills. The genuine, honest and simple electricity consumers with "habit is the second nature", and moral responsibility to make payment of electricity bills on time, always suffer, and they are financially hard hit due to price hike of electricity.

Many owners of mills, factories, workshops, industries, hotels and restaurants do not make payment of the electricity bills for years together. Many govt semi-govt offices, organisations and establishments misuse electricity. Many dishonest consumers, in collaboration with some corrupt electric meter readers, make fictitious bills. Almost daily after sunset we see hundreds of shops decorate their establishments with thousands of electric bulbs. It is an open secret that they get illegal connections with the help of some corrupt employees of the PDB.

Under the above circumstances we would request the concerned authorities to root out so called system loss and do away with the corrupt in the power sector first and then raise the rate of tariff if necessary. Then and then only will the common people appreciate the price hike.

O. H. Kabir
Dhaka

Day care centre

If we look back a few years, most women were busy in household affairs and caring for the children. Now women are participating in every sector and working side by side with the men. They manage both their family and work. However, they can't work with a tension free mind because they are not able to look after their children properly. Sometimes they are compelled to give up work for the sake of their kids.

I can recall my recent past when I worked in an NGO which entailed donor visits for appraisal. My two kids were very little then and there was no reliable person to look after them. Finding no other way I had to leave them with my governess. After returning home, sometimes I saw that they had not taken their meals or had gotten seriously injured. I became ill but was helpless because I was very hard up and had to work for a living.

As a working mother I feel very strongly the need for a day care centre to ameliorate my problem. I believe, under such conditions no mother can fully concentrate on her work. My female colleagues, like me, are suffering as much. I, on behalf of all working mothers, strongly demand setting up of day care centres so that we can concentrate more on our office work.

Sanjida Rahman Swapna
DOHS, Baridhara, Dhaka

Khaleda's eviction!

Reading Khaleda's eviction story, I feel ashamed of the political game being played in the country. Just imagine, you have got rid of a widow from her house where she spent the best days of her life. Her husband may have died long ago, but I am sure she used to cherish his memories in that house every day.

If she has done anything wrong she should be punished but taking away her house is a crime by itself. We should be thankful to her husband's courage to join the army where the Bengalis were treated as servants at that time. Without him there would have been one less freedom fighter. We should revere our dead, who have sacrificed so much of their time and their life for us. There is a saying that in an institution people come and go but only thing that remains is its principles.

Maruf Adnan
Bachelor of Civil Engineering
Monash University
Australia

Increase police patrolling

Dhaka City has become a very unsafe place especially before and at day break or from dusk because of the thugs and ruffians who seem to have got a free-rein. Last Friday (29/10/2010) while we -- a girl child, a boy, two women and I, were coming out of a Chinese Restaurant on Banani Road number 11 and walking up to reach the main road (Airport Road) at 10 pm, were stopped by two private cars, one in front and the other at the rear. There were five young men, all looked to be between 18 and 25 years. In the twinkling of an eye they got out of the cars and pointed a pistol at the chest of the child and dagger at the boy, and in a matter of few minutes robbed us of our all. The car number plates were hung reverse.

It is really perturbing that such hoodlums roam the streets of Dhaka freely! There were armed guards standing at the gates of the roadside buildings, but they stood as onlookers. Only a year back one of my brothers was mugged on Panthapath. These incidents are daily occurrences in Dhaka and we have none but the police to turn to for our safety and security. The police authorities must take cognisance of the situation and increase police patrol duties and make the police show their mettle to thwart these elements.

Sabuj Ahmed
Dhaka Cantt.
Dhaka

War crimes trial

The present government has committed to the people to complete the war crimes trial, but at present we see that the

process is going on very slowly. This is likely to create doubts in people's mind whether the trial would be completed at all. We are waiting for the completion of trial of war criminals. And if that does not happen there will certainly be a disconnect between the present government and the general people of Bangladesh. This may cost AL dearly in the next election. So we hope that the AL government will take adequate steps to compete the trial as early as possible.

Rowshan Ali
Dhanmodani
Dhaka

We need true leaders

Poverty and population boom are the roots of all other problems that threaten our national existence. The government has to play the key role in alleviate these problems. The aid agencies can only accelerate the work.

The government is steered by the political leaders. So the vision and mission of the government depend on the wisdom of the political leaders. But what we are seeing in our country. We are compelled to think, seeing the activities of the political leader, that they do not have the minimum commitment for the country. Even we see it in the high commands of the political parties. Most leaders are busy finding faults with other leaders; in public it is the opposition party's leader and behind the curtain it is his contender within the same party.

Since the fall of Ershad the AL and BNP have forming government alternatively. This trend reins in the recklessness in the leaders fearing consequences in the next election. But another new

device has been invented by them, that is the first half of their regime is spent criticizing the previous govt. and the last half is spent on planning for regaining the power in a shortcut way. Eventually, they do not get time to work for alleviating the pressing problems like poverty and population. I admit that there are some exceptions and perhaps that is why the state still exists. Ultimately we need true leaders for turning around the situation.

Mobarak Ali
Gopibagh, Dhaka

Negligent officials

I have just received the Dhaka City Corporation holding Tax bill book of 2010-2011 after the expiry of rebate date of 30th September 2010, due to negligence of somebody in the DCC, I believe. Again, the bill book indicated total arrear of 2009-2010 though I have paid the tax at Janata Bank, Mogbazar in August 2009. Thus who is at fault - the bank officials or DCC authorities?

I had to shuttle between DCC office and my residence resulting in traffic jam, I fear. Thousands of people like me are to travel to many destinations like banks, gas office, phone office, electricity office, tax office etc. because of poor services and negligence of officials.

The Bangladesh Bank Governor may issue orders to all the banks to use courier services. While the governor appears frequently in media he may also visit the banks from time to time. My sufferings should be compensated from the salary of the concerned official; let accountability prevail.

Mahmud Ali
New Eskaton Road
Dhaka

Why the hesitation, PM?

It is unbelievable that the government is dragging its feet in according Musa Ibrahim the due honour, respect and gratitude he rightly and richly deserves. Does it have such a myopic view and is so distant from the people that they don't recognize the will of the people?

The PM rushed to bestow flowers, appreciation and a plot of land on the Bangladesh cricketers for a lesser achievement (no disrespect to the cricketers intended). Each cricketer also received large amount from the sponsors. Musa, on the other hand, is still trying to pay off all the bills he accumulated in bringing the honour and glory to Bangladesh.

An innovative and excellent suggestion of putting Musa on a postage stamp was put forward by Sir Frank Peters. That obviously does not put any taka in Musa's pocket directly or in any way assist in securing his future or providing for the welfare of his family, but it does carry enormous esteem and many spin-off benefits for our young hero and Bangladesh in general. Why there is hesitation on the part of the PM to do what is just and right for Musa is beyond my comprehension. They're sure to lose votes on this count alone.

Hamza Gazi
Nikaton, Dhaka

Hartal card!

After the shameful drubbing the BNP received at the last elections, it was just a question of time when they would bring out the dreaded "hartal" card, in order to create chaos in the country and somehow dislodge the government in power. Never mind that they had promised not to use that card, and to perform their duties as the Loyal Opposition.

It is very sad to see that the trump card has been put into play for such a frivolous cause. A woman is losing a house, which the highest court of the land has decided was given for her use illegally, and as all efforts to overturn and/or delay that decision have been in vain, the Party and its supporters have decided to bring the country to a standstill, to cause untold suffering to the business community, and further sufferings to people who wanted only to go to their homes to celebrate the Eid-ul-Adha; all this over the loss of a house.

Why is the country being

What is logical is not legal What is legal is not logical!

Having witnessed a full-day drama on the eviction of the Cantonment house by the Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia, I realised the practical meaning of the saying, "What is logical is not legal, what is legal is not logical". Perhaps the Leader of the House could have intervened as a gesture of goodwill to assist her professional colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, bridging the gap between the legal and the logical requirements.

If the law declares staying of Begum Zia in the Cantonment residence illegal then she has to leave the house as she has already done respecting the rule of law. But the govt., appreciating Begum Zia's official standings, could have waited till after Eid-ul-Azha and for the higher court's verdict on the issue. After all, we are citizens of a democratic country where human values should get priority.

Professor M Zahidul Haque
Dhaka

Updated information

The wonders of information and communication technology and advancement in other fields of science and technology have enhanced the ability of human beings.

This era demands speed and accuracy, this era ensures comfort. This is the era of digitalisation. It is the pledge of the present government to digitalise the country. It is certainly a matter of hope and also of great aspiration of the people of a country where money spent for purchasing a simple electronic device like tungsten bulb is sufficient for a meal of a hungry man.

However the government is

assuring us again and again about their pledge, but where are the actions? When we search the web site of different ministries the information we get are outdated? It is imperative that information is updated constantly. From where will people collect data when, in spite of the right to information, people cannot get updated information from government web sites? This is a must to begin digitalisation.

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Chittagong

