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Long-standing problems



SHAFIQUL ISLAM KAJOL / DRINKNEWS

Our country is faced with three grave and chronic problems:

1. Sewage and drainage systems are connected with the rivers; and millions of tonnes of dirty water, chemical wastes and garbage of cities and towns of the country are thrown into the rivers making polluting

them.

2. Due to river erosion, thousands of people become homeless, landless and unemployed; they do not have any means of livelihood.

3. Thousands of people suffer from different types of diseases due to drinking arsenic contaminated

water.

Who will solve these long-standing problems, when and how? How long will we sit idle with our hands folded? Why don't we request the UN to help us solve our problems?

OH Kabir
Dhaka

Parking spaces needed



We know that the increased number of vehicles on the roads of the capital is the reason behind severe

traffic jam. But parking problem is also a reason that should not be ignored. The vehicles cannot run

smoothly on the roads, because the parked vehicles occupy a part of the roads. Vehicles are parked on the roads because no designated car-parking spaces are available for them in the city. When various organisations build markets, houses and offices, they forget to set aside car parking spaces! So, people are compelled to park their vehicles on the roads obstructing vehicle movement, which causes severe traffic jam.

The authorities concerned should monitor whether the constructors are following the building code and building parking spaces while constructing buildings. Besides, if the government can arrange for public parking places in the city, I believe that traffic jam will be reduced.

Md. Iqbal Hossain
Zafraabad, Sankar
Dhaka

Aspectacular sight

While coming back home in the evening on December 2, 2010, we came across a spectacular sight of two elephants gracefully parading the streets of the capital at the intersection of Mirpur road and Panthapath.

Needless to say, we come across unpleasant sights all over the capital almost every other day. The sight of the two giant creatures was indeed a welcome relief in the midst of all these chaos and confusion.

The apparent wellness of the lovely giants, which impressed me the most, implies that they are well taken care of by the mahouts. I was really impressed to watch the elephants proudly parading the streets of Dhaka.

Hopefully with the loving care of the Mahouts, these lovely giants shall not become extinct in the near future and continue to delight their beholder for a long time.

Nigar Chowdhury
One-mail

AL - BNP confrontation

The major parties, AL and BNP are sworn enemies; and except for the common platform to remove Ershad from the seat of power, these two parties have been at loggerheads at all times. Their behaviour with each other is unlike major oppositions in many democracies in the world.

In U K , m a n y Commonwealth countries, USA and many European countries, there is no animosity and vindictive attitude between political parties. However, if we look deep, then there are some fairly apparent reasons for this bitter relationship between AL and BNP that cannot be totally ignored. AL with Sheikh Mujib as the leader, created this nation, by revolting against Pakistan armed forces. In turn, he himself was brutally killed by the armed forces of Bangladesh! After the killing, the events that followed in Bangladesh armed forces elevated Zia to the national scene.

In that context, no wonder that the two parties are poles apart! Even today, responsible BNP leaders talk in terms of violence on the streets! Can we, therefore, expect any chance of peaceful democracy given that the two parties are carrying the baggage of a historical political divide?

Frustrated Bangladeshi
Dhaka



Trade wars

Despite sustained denials by the Pentagon, the leaked cables from WikiLeaks confirm that U.S. military special operations forces have been secretly working with the Pakistani military to conduct offensive operations and coordinate drone strikes in the areas near the Afghan border.

Pentagon spokesperson Geoff Morrell called it "conspiratorial" and explicitly denied that US special operations forces were doing anything other than "training" in Pakistan. But in recent years, they go to war for commercial reasons, they're trade wars. Nearly every one of America's wars was fought under different excuses, even as far back as the Civil War. Before every war, there's a long period of mental conditioning and psychological preparation.

Roosevelt was informed ahead of time

that the Japanese were going to strike Pearl Harbour, even of the hour, and this all came out years afterwards, but he never did a thing and never let the information out to the Armed Services or anything because he knew that was the only thing that would make the American people mad enough to go to war. So Sunday morning came, Dec 7, 1941, at Pearl Harbour, and, as usual, the military services all took the day off. Of course then this was played up into big propaganda: "A horrible atrocity, the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbour," "a terrible slaughter," "a stab in our back" and all of this stuff, and it did it. It made the Americans mad enough, and the very next day Congress met and declared war - WWII.

Ted Rudow III, MA
One-mail

Deaths in custody

The recent death of a teenager in police custody has marred the already damaged reputation of our law enforcers. It has been alleged that some officials have demanded bribe in exchange of the release of the youth. The police officials claimed that he was a 'suspected' mugger and was caught with several of his accomplices. What happened next is hard to believe. The court sent the underage 'suspected' mugger on a two-day remand! After two days, the teen ended up in the hospital bed.

Whether or not the allegation of demanding bribe is true, it is certain that the 'remand process' in our country is not ok. How a teenager was forced into this torment should be revealed through an honest and fast probe. We have cele-

brated 20th November as the Universal Children's Day but this incident shows us how far we lag behind in ensuring the rights of children. I hope the people who are running the country would realise it sooner than later.

Shahriar Kabir
Eskaton Garden
Govt. Officers' Qtrs
Dhaka

Musa Ibrahim

I work at Nokia in Finland where my office is like a mini United Nations with people from around the world. Many, if not all, are snow and skiing aficionados and Mount Everest conquerors like Musa Ibrahim are hailed as heroes. When Musa conquered the majestic mountain, interest in Musa and Bangladesh in general rose to a new peak in the office and I was very proud. Everyone had seen and

read about him in the media and turned to me for more information.

Now, these same people are speechless and confused as to the way he is being mistreated by the Bangladesh government, which is also embarrassing for me as a Bangladeshi. In Finland, heroes are treated as highly respected members of the community.

Website searches reveal Dhaka-based Sir Frank Peters, a well-wishing foreigner with foresight, international perspective, and irrefutable logic, is advocating that a postage stamp be printed in Musa's honour as a token of the nation's respect. Why the powers-that-be cannot see the kudos this would bring Bangladesh at home and overseas, is incomprehensible to us.

Sheikh Nur Jahan
Finland

Good programmes on television

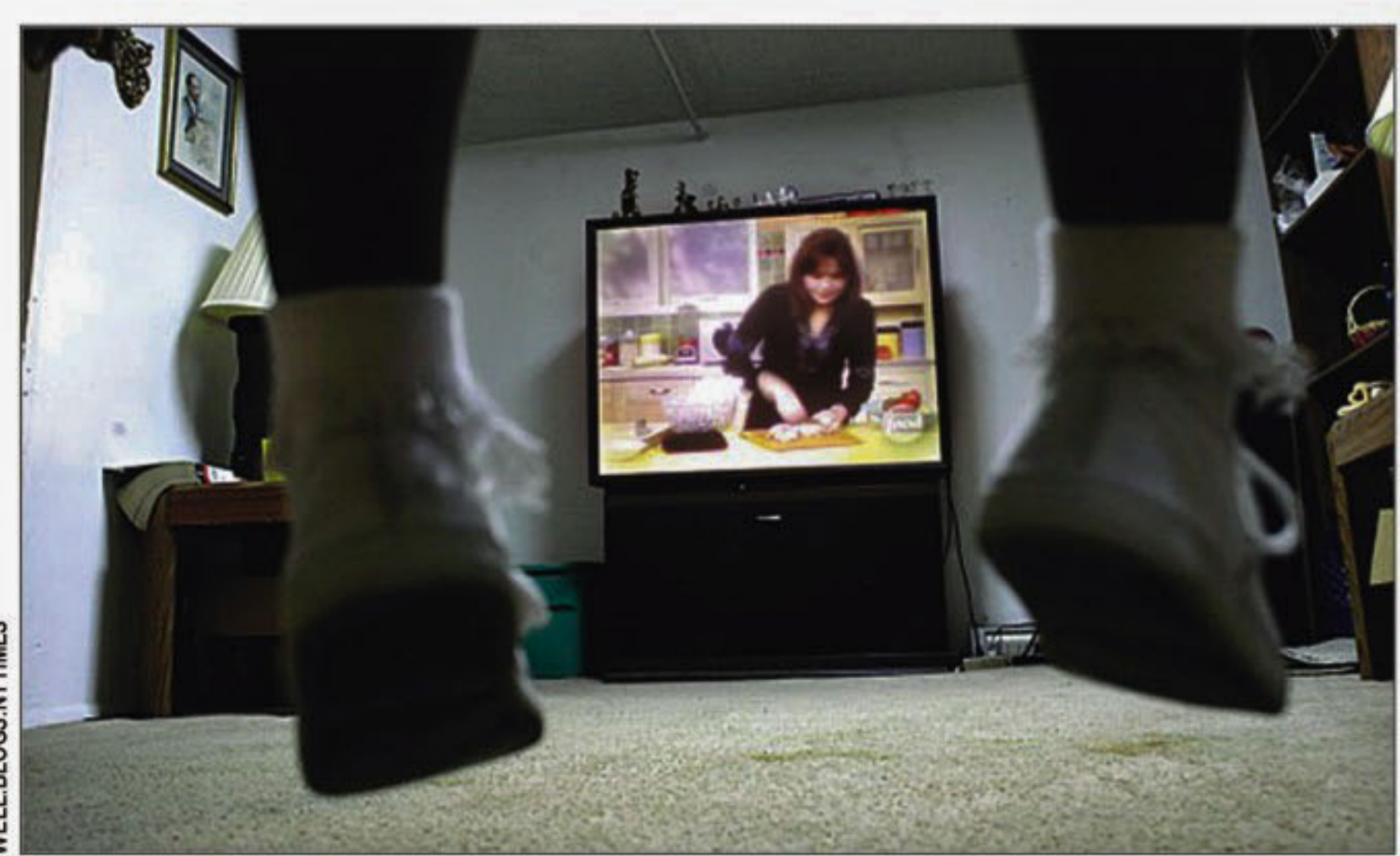
I agree with the tone of the letter of Sakhawat Samir Choudhury (29th November). Finding good programmes on television is, indeed, difficult. Moreover, it is perfectly natural to fear that the content of many programmes - and the advertising! - is brainwashing not only the young, but all of us with bad standards and values.

When I was growing up in the UK, there were just two BBC channels, neither with advertising, and the quality was so high that sometimes we did not know which to watch! The only 'brainwashing' we got was against ignorance concerning, for example, the needs of the disabled and the poor of the world, which were frequently the subjects of prime-time viewing - which had an enormous influence on a whole generation of us. The collapse of standards was, and is, a natural progression for those prepared (or forced) to abandon public

service broadcasting and turn it into 'selling audiences to advertisers.'

In every country, responsible parenting involves encouraging selective viewing but, in this dear country, it is almost impossible to discover what programmes are being shown on which channels and when. It would surely not be impossible, with some pump-priming capital, to set up an office with a computer and telephone so that there can be, on a website and in a weekly newspaper insert, a list of programmes across the whole spectrum of channels that most of us have. Then parents and guardians could sit down with their children and tell them which programmes on which channels they should watch.

Angela Robinson
One-mail



WELL BLOGS ANYTIMES

Denial of visa

India has denied visa to former Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf who wanted to attend a seminar in India. General Musharraf was invited to be a speaker at a seminar, hosted by the Young Presidents' Organisation, an international outfit involving influential business leaders.

India's refusal is because of Musharraf's recent anti-India statements. In his statements to the media, he blamed India for creating unrest in Pakistan's south-western Baluchistan

province. He had claimed that the involvement of India and Afghanistan in Baluchistan was creating unrest in the province.

On the other hand, some supporters of the former military ruler also applied to the Indian High Commission in Islamabad simultaneously for a visa for him. But the Indian government did not want to be seen encouraging gathering and activities of those elements who were opposed to the present regime in Pakistan.

Fahim Ibne Sarwar
Department of International
Relations, JU

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ONLINE VOICES

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Vilification of Grameen

Discussions should be fact based (December 6, 2010)

It is disgusting to see that our PM and some others are talking about probes. We know some people were not happy to hear about a Nobel Prize awarded to Prof. Yunus.

Did any of our leaders think for a minute that it could be a conspiracy to destroy the image of Bangladesh?
Saty Sen

There are a few persons in our country who have enhanced the prestige of Bangladesh internationally. Dr. Yunus, the founder of Grameen Bank, is one of them. He introduced micro credit to alleviate poverty. In my view it is not rational to criticise him basing only on a report without considering the real fact. He is a pioneer in the fight against poverty, which is the main impediment for achieving the MDGs.
Iqbal Ahmed Chowdhury

Thanks for providing a timely and important opinion.
Zaher

It is unfortunate that we rarely have the courage and perseverance to build on what have been created by our predecessors.
Sajjad

The DS should remain neutral and refrain from making comments that unfortunately sound like the voice of the GB. We also

respect Dr. Yunus. I am also not happy hearing Hon. PM's comments on this incident so early.
Faqrul

Good points in the article, thanks.

Why was the Norwegian company been silent for so long? And why are they now criticising the undemocratic process suddenly?
MAS Molla

We need to know the whole truth.
Dr. karim

The allegations against Prof. Yunus also suggest that he exerted pressure 12 years ago to have the complaints of NORAD and the Norwegian Embassy disposed of. There still remains a dispute whether the settlement was in fact amicable or whether it merely festered and just blew up publicly now.
MBI Munshi

Thanks for your sensible editorial. I am not surprised at the attitude of my fellow countrymen who are always too eager to sacrifice their national pride at whatever they see or hear in the Western media, any utterance from them is always a gospel truth to us all.
Abdul Munim Chowdhury

I wonder how the PM of our country can speak in such a language and manner about Dr. Yunus and

Grameen Bank based on a report of a foreign journalist. She has all the authority to order an investigation into the matter, but instead of doing that she made comments that sounded like the outcome of personal vendetta against a person and an institution that brought so much name and fame for our nation.
Mahfuzul Hoque Chowdhury

I fully agree with these comments. The allegation of any wrongdoing against Grameen Bank has not been proved. The Prime Minister's criticism was unfortunate.
Mahfuzur Rahman

You are right in your stance. A section of the press may have ulterior motives to malign our only Nobel laureate, but how come our elected head of state castigates him?
MAS Molla

Thanks, DS. We are very disappointed to hear the PM's comment whereas the Finance Minister's speech is very positive. If any anomaly occurred, the govt. should investigate the matter.
AKMAli Reza

The PM should be judicious in making statements.
Robin

Good editorial. We should be more sensitive and empathetic while criticising. People would become confused if all of us comment publicly without sufficient proofs.
Ram Chandra Das

This editorial assures us room for sensible and rational thinking.
Masudur Rahman

I was expecting a strong criticism in this editorial against PM's reaction.
Zahid

Nobody, whether he is a national or an international figure, is above the law. If Dr. Yunus has done something wrong, he has to swallow the bitter pill of public criticism. If he has not, he will come out triumphant. So why make so much noise about it?
Husain Imam

I worked in Grameen Bank as branch manager for many years. I observed that micro credit could benefit poor people who needed money to invest in small businesses like grocery, tea stall, small cloth store, etc. I saw that the rickshaw pullers had become owners of rickshaws and other poor people did seasonal businesses. I also saw (I myself worked for it) thousands of poor women become owner of a piece of land because of Grameen's housing loan policy. A poor person or family may benefit from an institutional loan in a market economy. This is completely in congruence with economic theories. So the claim by some that micro credit does not benefit the poor is not true.
Qazi Nazrul Huque

I agree that comments should be made based on facts. Dr. Yunus has brought honour for the nation. At the same time, we are also feeling uncomfortable due to recent news about him and his organisation.
Swapan Kumar Sutradhar

Thanks to The Daily Star for bringing the right perspective to the madness going on in the local media, which is spilling over to international media too. I think only one fact is sufficient to assure everyone, that is, Prof. Yunus doesn't have a single taka of ownership in any of the Grameen organisations.
Shafqat Ullah