



OUDDUS ALAM / DRIKNEWS

Agriculture Year 2011?

Recently the Incidin Bangladesh and the Jatiya Krishi Parjalochona Committee Nagorik Porisor in a joint press conference at Dhaka Reporter's Unity urged the government to declare the year 2011 as "Agriculture Year" with a view to put emphasis on the development of our agriculture sector, the most important economic sector of Bangladesh.

While sincerely supporting the above proposal, I would like to throw some light on some of their six-point demands. Regarding the National Agricultural Policy, the Ministry of Agriculture, as far as I know, has already finalised the draft National Agriculture Policy which is now undergoing official processes for final approval by the government.

To meet up their second demand, I think the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) together with the NGOs working at the farmers' level can organise farmers to form 'Farmers' Club.' The other demands including formulation of Law to prevent adulteration in agricultural inputs need immediate attention of the relevant authorities for necessary action.

Meanwhile, it is sincerely expected that the government will consider the above proposal for declaring the Year 2011 as the "Agriculture Year" as a mark of recognition to our respectable farming community.

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Proposed international airport

The government has started to acquire more than twenty five thousand acres of wet and agricultural land near the capital city for the purpose of constructing a new international airport. My first question is why suddenly it has become necessary to construct a new airport in close vicinity of another one at a colossal cost, leaving aside other burning problems of the country, whereas the existing international airport is capable of handling the present inflow and outflow of passengers quite comfortably?

While we are clamoring for funds to battle with the adverse effect of climate change in Bangladesh, are we not creating more climatic problems by filling up a large chunk of wetland and agricultural land vitally needed for food production for our hungry people and destroying fish and bird sanctuaries causing ecological imbalance? Has any environmental study been carried out? Before undertaking such a gigantic project a feasibility study is needed to be carried out by the experts.

If only to commemorate the name of a national leader such an ambitious project is undertaken, we can only pray to Almighty Allah to save this nation. Who will guarantee that the name of the new airport will not also be changed with the formation of a new government by other political parties in future? What will happen if the present government fails to complete the project during their tenure and another party comes to power next? As seen in the past, undoubtedly, the partially done project would be declared abandoned.

It is necessary for the government to prioritize issues instead of paying unnecessary attention to unimportant ones.

Mohammad Ataul Hoque
 On e-mail

We are deeply shocked by learning that the government is planning to build another airport. According to the report published in The Daily Star on

December 29, 2010, the government's decision of building Bangabandhu International Airport covering an area that includes thousands of acres of agricultural land and the biggest wetland near the capital without any feasibility study and environment impact assessment (EIA) has triggered mass protests in the locality.

On December 27, several thousand people formed a human chain and barricaded Dhaka-Mawa Highway at Hasara in Munshiganj for four hours in protest of the plan.

From TV news I learned that some vested quarters are trying to portray the proposed area as a barren land which is not at all true. I have seen on the TV screen the lush greenery, the yellow mustard flowers covering the proposed airport site, the vegetables growing abundantly and the wetlands filled with fishes. It will be a crime to destroy all these for a whim.

We have already three international airports, there is no need for another airport right now. The government must abandon the plan. It is our firm belief that if Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was alive, he would not have supported this plan, as a friend of the people he would have been sympathetic to their cause.

Nur Jahan
 Chittagong

Ban on polythene bags

The government banned the use of polythene bags in 2001 considering long term detrimental consequences. But regrettably, polythene bags are being used throughout the country, mostly in the capital. Every time we buy some commodities, the shopkeeper seems to be treating us with a polythene bag.

Polythene is an organic polymer which remains unchanged for years, even below the soil, posing serious environmental hazards. It is high time the government realised the hazards and take all out efforts to stop the use of polythene bags.

Tashrif Billah
 Student, EEE
 BUET



PHOTO: STAR

Hazards of taking admission abroad

Every year a large number of students from Bangladesh go abroad for higher studies. They have to face a lot of problems during their application process. The major difficulty that they are often confronted with is the dilemma of sending their application fees. The new foreign currency exchange policy introduced by our government is very effective, but not in the case of students.

Foreign currency including remittances can enter our country, but a transaction of cash cannot be made. Most of the national and international banks existing in our country have no solution to this problem. They all have the same opinion when it comes to sending money abroad. They suggest opening an RFC (Regional Foreign Currency Deposit) account which is not possible for the local students who have never set foot on a foreign land before. Even international Master Card and Visa Card are not accessible to many students. The corporate branches of some reputed private banks suggest that the students

should open a student file, which too, is allowed, if the Letter of Acceptance from the designated university can be acquired. But how can that be possible if the application fee cannot be deposited prior to the deadline? The student file can not be opened within a short period of time.

It takes a lot of time and effort for students like us to arrange the necessary papers for application and if the chance of admission to a good university becomes restricted for a prospective applicant only because there is no way of sending a small amount of application fee abroad, it is depressing.

I hope our government would look into this matter and resolve the problem.

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A boy's death in police care

The news of death of a teenage boy in police custody, published in different national dailies on Dec 3, must have evoked emotions in all conscious readers. It was alleged that police of Jatrabari PS had picked the boy Sagor (17), along with others during the pre-hartal mass arrest while he was on his way home. According to the news, the boy was taken on a two-day remand and produced before the court on Nov 29. Afterwards, he was sent to Dhaka Central Jail where he fell sick in the morning on Nov 30 and the jail authorities admitted Sagor to DMCH where he died the same evening. DMCH morgue sources said that injury marks were found on different parts of his body and his lungs were badly infected.

Many now believes that Sagor have been tortured in custody and died due to severity of the injuries. Proper probe should be made into such sad incidents and the guilty should be punished, plain and simple.

Md Mohsin Ali
 Nuton Courtpara
 Kushtia

Using Facebook

Facebook is a leading social networking website. We communicate with friends inside and outside the country through this site. Majority of the users of Facebook in our country are students.

But it is a matter of regret that many students spend less time on study and use Facebook all the day. Many of them create groups or pages on Facebook where they post a wide range of satirical remarks about politicians and other renowned personalities. Some children open Facebook accounts showing fake age.

Students should use Facebook for a specific time a day so that it does not hamper their study.

M Faisal Saleh
 Chunati Hakimia Kamil (MA) Madrasa
 Lohagara, Chittagong

Dhaka today

On 24th December, I heard the news on the radio that Dhaka's drainage system, roads and footpaths are being improved. But the statement only applies to the suburban and residential areas. The authorities should spend some money for developing the areas where the working class people live. They live in areas with bad drainage systems which cause severe diseases.

We hope in 2011 the government with the assistance of the people will be successful in building a clean Dhaka.

Ahmed Fahad
 Dhanmondi, Dhaka



WAHID ADNAN / DRIKNEWS

Garment factories in high-rise buildings

The media is regularly flooded with news of fires in factories located in high-rise buildings. Why this is allowed? It is not the norm in the industrialised countries. Besides, factories are set up in the residential areas of municipalities, where factory buildings do not exist. There is no publicity on these aspects for public awareness. The govt. should review the factory codes to save human lives.

The govt. decided to shift the factories from the crowded cities, but the shifting arrangements are going on at a very slow pace. Top priority is being given to non-essential mega-projects, for political publicity.

There are no moves for decentralisation of power and administration, with the result Dhaka mega city is dying, and the other districts have no attractive power, due to monopoly by the politicians sitting in Dhaka. There

is huge wastage of time and energy in chasing the opponents (the Opposition); and enough attention is not being paid to long-term national projects. This is a symptom of amateurish governance.

In four decades, the spirit of independence has evaporated; while we are so passionate to observe the annual anniversaries! This is due to lack of dedicated top leadership, who depend on sycophancy. It is because the vast majority of the voters have no holding power (economically backward, and rural based).

Corrupt politics encourages indifference within the bureaucracy (not in public interest). We have the advantage of huge human resources and cheap labour, but the latter are being exploited, leading to a sort of slave labour conditions.

A Mawaz
 Dhaka