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# Vote for Sundarbans



SHEKH HASAN / DRINKNEWS

Many educational institutions have already arranged programmes to vote for the Sundarbans to find its place in the Seven Wonders of the World. It is very important to arrange more such programmes, because time is running out. This year the New Seven Wonders of the World will be announced. So, the educational institutions, especially the universities and colleges, should arrange

programmes for the pupils to vote for the Sundarbans. I think the govt. should immediately arrange programmes throughout the country for encouraging the general people to take part in the voting. Different NGOs, social and cultural organisations can also play a vital role in this regard. The newspapers should publish special features and the TV channels should air

advertisements about the Sundarbans. I urge all the people of Bangladesh to vote for the Sundarbans for branding Bangladesh in the world. To vote, please log on to [www.new7wonders.com](http://www.new7wonders.com) or [www.votesundarban.net](http://www.votesundarban.net).  
**M.M. Parvej**  
Dept. of Fisheries  
Patuakhali Science and Technology University

## Mother of the Nation

Contributions toward social and economic development of some extra-ordinary Arab women deserve appreciation and acclamation. Her Highness Sheikhha Fatima Bint Mubarak, wife of the founder and the first president of United Arab Emirates (UAE) late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, who is known as the 'Mother of the Nation' made significant contributions in the establishment and promotion of women's rights in the Arab world. She also contributed in the field of literacy, mother and child care, welfare of disabled, elderly persons and orphans. She is the President of UAE's Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood, Chairperson of the UAE Family Foundation, etc. At international level, she is presently holding the position of extraordinary Ambassador of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. While appreciating the important roles Sheikhha Fatima has been playing for the social and economic development of UAE, I sincerely hope that not only the UAE but the entire Arab world would march forward towards socio-economic and cultural development.  
**Professor M Zahidul Haque**  
Department of Agricultural Extension & Information System  
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University  
Dhaka

## AL's election pledges

The incumbent government has celebrated 2nd anniversary of their tenure a few days back. Flashy advertisements have been made through every medium possible. It even organised a concert to commemorate its success. But was it worth it? The government promised a lot of things in its election manifesto. It promised to ensure smooth and constant supply of electricity and gas. And it also promised to wipe out the muggers, thugs and hooligans from every nook and corner of the society, and what not? Have all those things really been achieved? Mere lip service to convey the idea of 'change' is not going to work anymore. The government must work with its people, hand in hand, to fulfill the promises it made.  
**Rafi Abdullah**  
North South University  
Dhaka

## Energy projects: pros and cons

An interesting front page report on the subject was published in a local daily on 2nd January which set a pessimistic tone on the subject. However, despite delays and disappointments, the government's attitude and approach has been reasonably positive and pragmatic. The problem we face is local energy

availability in terms of coal and natural gas. Apart from open pit coal mining, the coal gasification based power plant needs to be speedily taken in hand. Natural gas exploration must go ahead without further loss of time. Drilling for gas at potential areas should be taken up expeditiously. Though exploration for gas is a high risk area; finance wise, we have no option but to face it and take risks. For off-shore drilling, we have to sort out the boundary demarcation disputes with the countries concerned, through international mediation if necessary. This is of course a slow process and could take may be five years or so, but we have no option! Meanwhile, the promising gas prospects at Bhola, should be drilled soonest.

Importing LNG, apart from high import costs, also needs initial large capital investment, for receiving the LNG cargo. The Middle East countries are shy on this, as reported in the dailies. They probably are pondering over about tying up such a proposal with a long term quantities of LNG import. This may be the reason behind the delay in their response.

Let's keep our fingers crossed on LNG, and hope for the best, while we go ahead with the development of local coal and gas prospects, the sooner the better!  
**Engr. S.A. Mansoor**  
Dhaka

## Bangladeshi youth

Lately, with all the reports of drug abuse, stalking and other uncivilized behaviour, I was very frustrated with the youth of Bangladesh. I felt relieved as I watched Brandwitz 2010 on ATN Bangla. The contenders had to present ways of branding Bangladesh through the ICC World Cup to promote foreign investment. Their creativity really impressed me. I could see great skills of leadership in them. The authorities should take some ideas from them to assist in the marketing of the ICC World Cup. If given enough opportunities, Bangladeshi youth can reach greater heights. I congratulate North South University for winning the competition.  
**Monica Islam**  
Dhaka

## The government should change its denial mode

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressed the nation on January 6, 2011 on completion of 2 years of her government. In her speech she pointed out the government's successes, one of them being the law and order. She claimed that law and order is better as her government has taken a tough stance against crime and corruption. This observation is so preposterous that I am at a loss for words. Home Minister Sahara Khatun also speaks in that vein, are they living in a bubble where no news of the outside world reaches them? Everyday news of horrible crimes is splashing over all the newspapers, radio and television; day by day, the criminals are becoming more daring. People are passing their days in fear and anxiety, not knowing what to do as the government continues to deny the gravity of the law and order situation and measures taken to contain these crimes are at best lukewarm.  
**Nur Jahan**  
Chittagong

## Gas and electricity crisis

We have been residing at Kadamtala, an underprivileged area of Bashabo, for many years. In this area from 8am to 3pm we do not get any gas supply. We complained to the Titas Gas many times, but the situation is deteriorating day by day. It is very difficult to feed the children before they go to school and college in the morning. Also, the electricity supply during the winter is not satisfying. Unfortunately, the electricity bill we get from the authorities is much higher than

the meter reading. If we complain to the meter readers, they say they will adjust it next month. But that never happens. Through your columns we would like to bring this matter to the attention of the government.  
**Maheen Chy**  
Kadamtala Purba Bashaboo  
Sabujbag, Dhaka

## Poor customer service

On 31st December 2010, I went to the Shahjalal Int'l Airport to see off one of my family members who was going to USA. Some passengers there were complaining about our airport services. There was a senior US citizen among them who told me that in no international airport in the world they have to pick up their own luggage except for this airport. This is hard for the aged persons. The authorities concerned should take immediate measures to improve their customer service.  
**Md Zahidul Islam (Milton)**  
L.L.B Final Year  
Bangabandhu Law College  
Dhaka

## Quality education

There have been some substantial changes in the education sector lately. The initiatives of the present government have been welcomed and well accepted by all strata of society. However, while preparing the curriculum or upgrading the syllabus or contents of the books, quite a significant things are to be considered. Leadership and self-development related topics could be incorporated in the syllabus. Besides, the duties and responsibilities of a good citizen can be included in the textbooks in an interesting way. The young learners are likely to be motivated by this. The lessons should be as easy as possible. Furthermore, many success stories could be inserted in particular books. The short biography of those who are famous and have undergone severe difficulties throughout their lives could be included in the textbooks of early classes. Above all, a young learner is to be made enthusiastic and familiar with certain essential aspects of life. Undoubtedly, education is the backbone of a nation. Therefore, forgetting all the shortcomings of the past, we should formulate realistic strategies and execute those in order to strengthen the education sector of our country.  
**Shohag Mostafij**  
MBA (Strategic & International Management)

# The world's largest economy



The decade (2000-2010) has been marked by China's relentless rise from largely insignificant player in the global economy to the most prominent driver of the world economy. In the year 2000, China was the world's sixth largest economy behind the U.S., Japan, Germany, France, Britain and Italy. Today China is the world's second largest economy after the United States, with a GDP of \$5 trillion compared to \$14 trillion for the U.S. and is set to outpace America as the world's largest economy before the end of this decade. While the U.S. economy is facing anemic growth (barely 2%), the Chinese economy is growing by more than 10% a year. Already, China has overtaken America as the world's biggest trading nation. China is now the biggest exporter of goods to America with a trade surplus of more than \$200 billion in China's favour. China is also bankrolling America's budget deficits. With growing incomes of the Chinese consumers, China is now less dependent on the U.S. market while America is looking forward to China as a market for its products. The Chinese economy is pulling the European nations out of recession. Because of growing demands from the booming China for German cars and machineries, the German economy is growing again. Last year, Germany's biggest automaker, Volkswagen, sold more cars in China than it sold in Germany. France's export to China grew by 14% after the recession hit the globe in 2009. The New Year may see yet another spectacular rise in the Chinese economy. The 21st century belongs to China.  
**Mahmood Elahi**  
Ottawa, Canada

# Preserve public facilities

The lakeside walks are one of the nicest things to happen in North Dhaka but I am shocked at the way some of those with lakeside houses treat them! These are

not poor people, sir! I speak of the Gulshan side of the Badda lake. It is not unusual for the owners of properties to let the

builders keep their building materials overflowing public space but these people, once the building is finished, dump their waste, or unused

materials, down the side of the lake! The quantity of all sorts of rubbish is really obnoxious but no one is taking responsibility for clearing it up.

The lakeside paths are a major public facility for rich and poor, young and old - like the excellent public field in Lalmatia that I lived near for over 3 ½ years and watched it ruined by being taken over by a local cricket club who stopped the locals using it. Whatever authority is accountable needs to be told to take a walk and see the extent to which action is required to preserve public facilities against private greed, laziness and abuse by those who should know better. As I used to tell my pupils, "If the middle and upper classes do not know how to behave, how do you expect the poor to behave?"  
**Angela Robinson**  
Gulshan, Dhaka



PHOTO: STAR