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Enhance mustard oil production



QUDDUS ALAM/ DRIKNEWS

In a talk show on a TV channel last Sunday the commerce minister mentioned that only 5% of our total consumption of edible oil is met from the local produce like mustard oil. This pushed me to remember my boyhood days in mid fifties, when living in a sub-divisional town, I saw all people in that town used only mustard oil for cooking. If we consider the population of that time at about 40 million (US census record) which is about 25% of the present population of Bangladesh

at 160 million, then what happened today that we import 95% of our edible oil consumption as the minister mentioned. To my calculation it should be 75% only of total consumption today. Present higher consumption figures may be for two reasons, one for increased cooking oil consumption due to improvement in our life style or due to some wrong information.

If mustard oil could satisfy the cooking oil need of 40 million people 50 years back, then why it is not sufficient

to meet requirement of same population size today and to reduce import of cooking oil to 75% and not 95% (mentioned by Minister) of today's total requirement. Moreover, our success in agriculture sector also can enhance mustard oil production by using improved seed and method of cultivation. If it is due to change of life style then it is dangerous for our health as per medical research results and as doctors' advocate. 6 months back one of my doctor friends wanted to know

the cooking oil consumption of my family of 5 members and I said 5 liters per month. He suggested reducing it by half but I settled for 3 liters a month. None of my family members feels any change in reduced taste of food prepared in our house. But that change reduced my family consumption of cooking oil by 40%. Is it not a great save in our economy and better health for our people? If yes, then all should work accordingly from today.
KMZA, Dhanmondi, Dhaka

BSF: terror at the border!

Border security force (BSF) of India looks very dangerous. Their shoot and kill tactics continues as they are becoming more and more abusive towards the lives of border people of Bangladesh. I think this is certainly not a recently emerging burning issue. BSF is killing Bangladeshis with pretty recklessness for the last 8/9 years or so.

The recent incident with "Fellani" speaks of their barbarism. They often kill people with absurd plea and take the dead bodies away or stage humorous drama to hand them over. How a

father will witness his daughter's dead body hanging from a border fence? His daughter's offence was to cross border illegally to return to her country to see her dreams coming true. BSF killed over 900 people in our border in the past decade as per the research done by Human Rights Watch (HRW) for illegally crossing border, grazing cattle near border and smuggling allegations. If these people were criminals, so why didn't they get the chance to be punished as per the rules and get justice? But BSF chose their better (!) & hassle free (!) way!

The issue of severe concern is that BSF is not paying any sort of heed to Ground Rules and other border rules. What is our government doing? Will BSF never be answerable? Now the reality resembles with a cartoon of daily "Prothom-Alo" where BSF using Bangladeshis to improve their shooting capability and training ground!

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Nothing new from NRB experts

With great optimism and hope I was looking forward to the output from The Daily Star colloquium on Alternative Energy and New Technology. Alas, the result was miserably disappointing, mainly because the NRB experts did not say anything new or anything that we had not already known. Almost all of their solutions and propositions were mere déjà vu, and they are all covered in standard graduate level textbooks.

I refer to some of their observations: "Bangladesh could opt for biomass, which is relatively inexpensive" as if we in Bangladesh never knew this fact! One 'expert' cited "roof gardening" example from developed countries, but did not explain how it could be pragmatic in the context of Bangladesh housing structures and social milieu. Another 'expert' said, "fuel conservation is a must to ensure energy security and lessen economic impacts of high energy costs" again, as if nobody in Bangladesh ever thought about it!

The NRB energy experts freely cited examples from North America, Europe and Japan, which are idle luxuries when faced with domestic compulsions. Our homegrown energy technologists and economists have enough experience and expertise to address the energy challenge in our country. NRB experts cut a sorry figure for unrealistic 'advice'.

A non-NRB
On e-mail

Act now!

In a letter to the Editor on January 17, Muhammed Jamil Ather writes from Karachi that we need to act now to reverse the causes of global warming and strike the right balance between development and conservation. I agree. Instead of whining about what the "developed" world has already caused (and as an American, I confess we've done a lot wrong) let's get on with correcting what we can where we are. Here in Dhaka, the asthma caused by "dust" (air pollution) is killing babies and shorten-

ing the lives of all residents. Let's enforce the laws already on the books to get brick factories to install scrubbers in their smoke stacks. You can see which ones are complying by seeing the white smoke pouring out, and which ones are polluting our lungs with coal-black smoke. Are bribes involved with this? And the buses and trucks with black exhaust--why are they allowed to operate? Construction sites? They should have "curtains" to contain the dust of concrete, sand, and sawdust and not be allowed to spew it into the atmosphere. We have the means to greatly improve our environment just by enforcing the laws we already have. Please, let's get started. It's a matter of life and death, and it's do-able!

Elaine Masters
Mohammadpur, Dhaka

When leaders speak

The Daily Star has carried an editorial today 11-01-11 on Begum Khaleda Zia's press conference. It is good reminder for both the Prime Minister and Begum Khaleda Zia. Well, the prime minister's self-satisfying explanation of her drive in various sectors, I believe, was a normal exercise which most heads of governments do because the general public in third world countries remains confused about what is going on in their countries.

But Begum Khaleda Zia as usual believes that she did not lose in the last election, she believes that Bangladeshis are her natural supporters; she also believes that no one loves Bangladesh but her.

In a nutshell, there was nothing new in her address. She appeared upset, for she lost one of her government houses for which she publicly wept, both of her sons are accused of wrong doings and many of her party supporters are facing charges for corruption. She has no other weapon to excite the people except by criticizing the present government. The DS could not find any sense of direction in her speech, no wonder!
Shafiqul Islam, NY

Bracing for the new order

Even a layman can now tell that the predominant theme in the present world is injustice. The post cold war era has seen the rise of America with her 'might is right' and 'either you are with us or with the enemy' policy.

The thin layer of semblance of civilization on the body of European countries came bare showing all its racist scars in the form of vilifying Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and intolerance to religious and cultural minorities. So they readily acquiesced in the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan by America and Palestinian lands by her proxy, Israel, without any compunction.

In the context of overwhelming bloodshed, injustice, poverty, inequity, the world is now in for a new world order. The birth pang of that new child of civilization has already begun. The oppressed people are now all the more ready to face the indomitable foe come what may, they are ready to fight oppressors.

Oppressed all over the world will forget their differences among them and be rallied under one banner.

The nature will then expose all its treasures to man. People will enjoy a blissful life of abundance and security. It is now only a matter of time.

Abdus Subhan
Lalpur, Natore

We're living in fear

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressed the nation on January 6, 2010 after completion of 2 years of her government. In her speech she pointed out the government's successes, one of them is 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. 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 are 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 does not acknowledge actual situation.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong

Job in sales profession

Selling organizations need to deploy people in the territories (demarcated markets) to promote products, to collect orders, and to deliver goods. In addition to this, many shop-keepers recruit people to sell goods from the shop-shelves and nowadays many banks and add-firms recruit people to visit customer to sell their services. However, salesmanship is an art. It can be sharpened through training and exercise. Many fresh university graduates or post-graduates can start their careers in this profession. In the beginning, they can run apace and can achieve the sales target. This sector will help us to solve the unemployment problem of our country.

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"Picnicsickness"

Every year so many new words are being included in the internationally recognized English dictionaries. In last two years that is, 2009 and 2010 more than 100 words and senses made their entries into reputed British and American dictionaries.

'Staycation' is a new English word that has been added to America's best selling Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. The meaning of the word is "a vacation spent at home or nearby"; usage example, "Are you planning a staycation this year?"

'Defriend' is another example of new word added to world famous Oxford English Dictionary which means "deleting someone from a friends' list (on social network site)".

There are many more new words. Interested readers may browse through the Internet to find the new words. In fact modern Internet culture has opened the door to create new words. I thought why not I try myself creating a new word? Yes, having witnessed some people became sick on their way back home or after reaching home from a picnic, I logged in to my Wikipedia (free encyclopedia on the web) account and inserted a new word 'Picnicsickness' with the following definition:

"Picnic is nowadays a common craze! Often people get sick after having picnic foods due to indigestion and food-poisoning which results in vomiting, stomach pain, chest pain, serious discomfort, etc., such after-math picnic ailments may be termed as "Picnicsickness".

Professor M Zahidul Haque
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Allow the poor to survive!

It's been one year since the Haitian earthquake. Haitians are in a terrible state, living in abject poverty, filth and sewage.

It's hard for poor nations to get a break from the rich ones. While the rich may offer foreign aid with one hand, the actions of the other hand more than negate that aid! So they've helped the poor to avoid starvation, but done nothing to help them with their long-term problem of producing their own food. Not only that, but the IMF and other international lenders are often willing to provide loans to these poor countries to help their people but part of the price is that these countries

have to lower their import barriers and "liberalize" their economy. And the effect is usually that cheaper foreign food and goods (from the U.S. and other wealthy countries) flood into the poor country, meaning its own agriculture and industry has a very hard time getting off the ground. So the poor survive on the "aid" of the rich, but just barely, while rich Western politicians make speeches about how much they're trying to help the poor, but how little effect it seems to have and how their aid is wasted.

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