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AMADUL HUQ / DRIKNEWS

Bangladesh, a safer place for mothers

Above is the headline of a news item published in the USAID's health newsletter 'FRONTLINES' special edition (April/May 2011) which reported that maternal deaths in Bangladesh fell from 322 per 100,000 in 2001 to 194 per 100,000 in 2010. This is indeed a tremendous accomplishment and the credit goes to the USAID's family planning programs in Bangladesh as well as the Government of Bangladesh. It may be mentioned here that each year, more than 150,000 women die in the first 48 hours after birth throughout the world; 1.6 million newborns die in that same time frame. Ninety-nine percent of these pregnancy-related deaths occur in the developing world. Under this critical situation, maternal deaths decreased by 40 percent during the last nine years in Bangladesh which is a significant achievement.

It is sincerely expected that Bangladesh would hold the trend of decreasing maternal deaths and it would be successful to meeting the 2015 deadline for the United Nations' fifth Millennium Development Goal: to reduce the maternal mortality rate by three-fourths.

Professor M Zahidul Haque
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Dhaka

Murder of former Finance Minister

The news report from Habiganj, published on 26th May in a local English daily, gives a complete new picture and new culprits for the murder! Now the former Home Minister has been identified also as a suspect, as stated by CID ASP, Md. Rafiqul Islam. He also states that no evidence against the former 'so-called culprits' of the murder, shown by the police during the past BNP government has been found! This is a serious allegation against the BNP and its ex-Home Minister! What has the BNP got to say about it? CID further stated, and I quote: "our reinvestigation found involvement of 14 new suspects who were spared during the previous probe!" Does it mean that the BNP authorities were accessories to the murder and suppressed evidence? Such persons also need to be tried and punished!

The police needs to carry out a thorough, impartial and detailed investigation and no one who were involved in this gruesome murder including the BNP ex-Home Minister should be spared under any circumstances.

Innocent civilian
Dhaka

Wishful thinking

There is no harm in wishful thinking, like Rabindranath Tagore, I want to say "kothao amar hariye jawar nei mana" (imagination has no limit).

The rift between our two main political parties makes us very sad and disappointed. Why can't they come together extending hands of friendship and co-operation? There are many things which could have been different if they tried and it is very simple. If on August 15, instead of celebrating her birthday, BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia used to pay a visit to Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina to convey her sympathy what difference it would have made! And if on May 30, Sheikh Hasina visited Khaleda Zia, it would have been an act of great kindness.

If shunning jealousy and vindictiveness, our political parties come together, we would all be overjoyed and the country would surely be benefited.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong

Blame game

We like to hide our incompetence. To attain a goal we do nothing but we keep on blaming others. Proverb goes that "a bad workman quarrels with his tools". Our character is clearly identical with this proverb. However, let's get rid of this blame game.

Mahmudun Nabi Miron
On e-mail

Lightning strikes



WAHID ADNAN / DRIKNEWS

Lightning strikes can produce severe injuries, and have a mortality rate of between 10 and 30%, with up to 80% of survivors sustaining long-term injuries. An estimated 24,000 people are killed by lightning around the world each year and about 240,000 are injured.

Generally the specialists advise everyone to have a plan for their safety when a thunderstorm occurs. This is important, since lightning can strike without rain actually falling. If thunder can be heard at all, then there is a risk of light-

ning. The safest place is inside a building or a vehicle. Risk remains for up to 30 minutes after the last observed lightning or thunder. Lightning can affect the brainstem which controls breathing. If a victim appears lifeless, it is important to begin artificial resuscitation immediately to prevent death by suffocation.

Mobarak Ali
RK Mission Road
Gopibagh
Dhaka

Do what you say

The prime minister and the leader of the opposition give separate messages to the nation every year on important national days, religious occasions and festivals. They greet our people, wish them good luck and urge them to build united, happy and prosperous Bangladesh, forgetting past mistakes and differences. We wonder whether they themselves practice their message.

O H Kabir
Dhaka

What Immanuel Kant said

In his famous book of 1795 Immanuel Kant advocated these three things: Standing armies must be totally abolished in due course; a country must not intervene with force to change another country's structure or government; during war a country must not act so that it becomes impossible to be trusted during a future period of peace.

The U.S. disarmed Japan to guarantee its war objective: that Japan never again becomes a threat to the U.S. In accordance with Kant's third principle, we must not apply limitless violence in war, and we must think about the period after the restoration of peace.

As we bargain for peace, let us remember there will be no refunds on lives given toward the same purpose. There will be love and laughter and peace ever after in God's tomorrow when the world is free of war. God blesses peace!

Ted Rudow III, MA
Encina Ave
Palo Alto
CA

Prices of edible oil

Bangladesh Vegetable Oil Refiners and Vanaspati Manufacturers Association will appeal to the government for the approval of an increase in the prices of soybean oil. Their proposition to raise the prices of oil to Taka 15 show how they are manipulating the market and hold the government hostage and compel the administration to meet their demands. It is also amazing that there are only eight importers who are importing oils to meet the demand of the whole country.

We strongly urge the government to increase the number of importers and break the monopoly of these eight importers. We also hope that TCB will come forward to keep prices of essentials stable by importing them from different sources.

There is no better option than to bringing in TCB in the market to countercheck the whimsical price increase. Our commerce ministry should also initiate stringent checking especially on oil mills, many of whom hide their actual stock to create artificial shortage in the market.

Humayun Hyder
Zigatola
Dhaka

Kuakata - a spectacular beach

Kuakata can be an awesome place to the local and foreign tourists. Our government should take initiatives to improve facilities there like roads, transport and security, accommodation, etc., in order to draw the attention of the tourists from home and abroad; and in this way we could earn a lot of money.

It may be mentioned that I went to Kuakata recently and was overwhelmed by the natural beauty of this beach. I also felt the sufferings of the tourists who came from different places of the country. I would request the government to take necessary steps so that tourists can reach Kuakata without any hassle.

Md Zahidul Islam (Milton)
Ex Sea Cadet
Bangladesh Navy &
AGM-Sea Export (Int'l Shipping Co.)



ONLINE VOICES

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PM's 'no' to caretaker

JS body to ask BNP for its proposal; BNP says no parliamentary polls under AL govt (May 31, 2011)

Nation needs credible, knowledgeable and nationalistic opposition party which is unfortunately not available currently. Our political parties are still behind the other mediocre Asian countries who are dreaming for middle income status within one decade. Political stability is needed and peoples power aspiration should be the only denominator.

Dr karim

Please don't cite what happens in other democracies. In every democratic country including India, UK and USA, politicians of ruling party go to jail for wrongdoing.

Prof. Ahsan Habib

Constitution is for the people. Any amendment is done for the sake of well-being of the people. What is amended today can be repealed tomorrow. Who are supporting AL today can change

their mind tomorrow if the expected changes do not come true. People keenly justify the fairness of any decision made by the government.

Nodi

The observation of the British Hugh Commissioner about political climate is just beginning to unfold. This is just one single most important constitutional issue which fails to see a satisfactory resolution by mutual dialogue and consensus. The other constitutional issues waiting for amendment to the constitution following court rulings are likely to take us to an unknown destination hurting our fragile democratic practice and political stability needed most now.

Faqrul

No good situation is prevailing to hold election under AL. It is

Genius is perception that no one else sees

Years ago I attended the Bangladesh Community Centre in Birmingham, England to hear Sir Frank Peters give a speech. During his talk he mentioned 'genius is perception of the obvious, that no one else sees' which I took home in my memory, wrote down, and repeated countless times over the years ever since.

During a recent conversation with my wife Serena, Sir Frank's name surfaced and his successful campaign to abolish corporal punishment in schools. He's a hero to our two boys, Ali and Abdul. We can't help but wonder why it's taken an individual, to accomplish this great social achievement and not one of the hundreds of massively-funded NGO youth organizations that's been in operation here for decades and whose mission statements profess to save and protect children from harm?

Surely the problem would have been as obvious to them as it was to Sir Frank? Or is this Sir Frank's memorable quotation 'Genius is perception of the obvious, that no one else sees' now reflecting back at him?

Aaquib and Serena Rahman
Farmgate, Dhaka

Presidents change, but policies not

The wind of change was blowing in the world political arena during the last US presidential election in 2008. The president changed but the major US policies remained unchanged. NATO forces are violating human rights in Libya in the name of restoring human rights; US drone attack is killing so called Talibans recklessly.

Questions were raised regarding the recent killing of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan, where the US contingent operated a secret mission violating the law of sovereignty of Pakistan. We have learnt that there was a chance to arrest bin Laden, so why did the US forces not arrest bin Laden?

Noruddin Mohammad Burhan
Dept of Political Science
University of Dhaka

Outrageous

ETV, in its investigative journalism, revealed a couple of days ago that a gentleman working for a power company in the capacity of a clerk or something like that, happens to own 17-18 flats in Dhaka. I just could not believe my ears and eyes. My question is what is the monthly income of a clerk in Bangladesh?

My guess is in order to own 17-18 flats in Dhaka, maintaining a family of say 4, one has to earn at least Tk. 1,00,000/= a month. If the gentleman in question does not make that amount, then he must have got some other means. It was also reported that he made this huge fortune in a very short span of time. Should Bangladesh be regarded as a land of opportunity or of corruption?

Saleh Ayub
On e-mail

E-voting and BNP's stand



PHOTO: STAR

Recent news reports suggest that BNP is against the introduction of E-voting in the next general elections. One of the BNP's senior leaders has openly declared that if E-voting is introduced, his party will not take part in the next general election. They have become afraid of E-voting even before knowing the system. BNP's reaction is similar to the reaction of some people who do not even like machine readable passports.

Present government is digitalizing everything and BNP is trying to pull us backward. The people of Bangladesh will not support BNP in this matter. I hope the BNP leadership will understand this and support the EC to introduce electronic voting system for free, fair and credible election in the country with participation of all.

Shafiqul Islam
NY

unthinkable at this stage. BNP will never join the election as a result it will get no validity. Please don't put the country to uncertain destination. AL must face the reality. This party will be responsible for destruction of judiciary.

Anonymous

It would be wised to the supreme court's verdict for the present government. Then it would be discussed with opposition party BNP and others parties for amending the constitutions.

Chandra Mani Chakma

Awami League fought for democracy for 24 years and came to power in 1972 but did not want democracy to survive. Again, Awami League fought for Caretaker Government and came to power through this system. Now, they again took the same path as before.

Abul Kashem

It is the foregone conclusion of the party in power that there shall be no caretaker government in future as was told by the ruling party members in many meetings which the so-called Chief Justice of the Supreme Court implemented through his great verdict. If the CTG remains in the constitution, the vision for 2021 cannot be implemented.

Ghulam Mustafa

The major parties always expect chair and power. They never believe each other. So, there is no alternative to caretaker government for free fair and transparent election and handing over power. This is universal truth for Bangladesh in the present context.

Latif

We want to keep alive our image as a democratic country in the world. To maintain this image, it is very urgent to sustain with the caretaker government system.

Motahar Hossain

In Bangladesh, election under the ruling party is hardly acceptable.

Syed Iqbal

There is no ideal democratic situation in Bangladesh and no election could be held under any political government. Those who are observing the political events in Bangladesh know what happens when an election is held under political government. Bangladesh got away from that and fundamentally people believe that a kind of caretaker government is absolutely necessary for the democratic development in the country. We feel that there is no alternative to caretaker government for the future of democracy.

Anonymous