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PHOTO: STAR

Schools should have own buses

One contributing factor to our worsening traffic situation is that most of our schools don't have their own transport services. With a very poor public transport system, most parents including myself are compelled to use private vehicles as the only option for sending the kids to school.

For example, in the same school in Dhaka, where my two sons and three nieces study, I need to send the car at least four times each day, to pick and drop them, owing to different class timings! Hence it's actually no surprise that our traffic situation will be in this state.

Rather than introducing new public buses for school children in some routes (which was a failure by the way, as most parents could not rely on it) and asking people to follow strongly the traffic rules to control this traffic issue, the government could impose on all big schools to have mandatory bus services.

This way, if each such big school invests on say 15-20 buses (even at profit base operation), that would easily replace 1000 private cars! I am sure if schools arrange their own bus services with proper driver check etc, many like me would be definitely inclined to use it for our kids.

Mohammad Mehroz Jalil
Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka

Israel's state violence

Israel's policy of treating Palestinians as sub-humans, condemning them to live in slum-like settlements and separating them from the rest of the world is criminal. Israel has not left any stone unturned in deterring the people from around the world from reaching out to the Palestinians.

It didn't have any qualms in seizing the French ship on Tuesday carrying a group of pro-Palestine campaigners. I was certainly amazed to hear Israeli military spokesperson blaming the unarmed activists on board the ship for their potential violent outbursts. I am certain that the world has not forgotten what Israel did last year with the Gaza-bound aid flotilla.

I think that the latest occurrence of preventing the French ship should be taken seriously by the world community and it should not turn its back on the people in Gaza who are starving and are even without medical supplies. The world must come to their rescue.

Muhammed Jamil Ather
Karachi, Pakistan

Stop coaching business!

Now-a-days, parents are not satisfied with the lesson rendered by the teachers at schools to their children. Regardless of the quality and reputation of the institution, almost every guardian as well as student takes coaching as a must for gaining higher grades! Some of the unscrupulous teachers use this coaching tool as a money-making tree. Sometimes they even threaten the students of giving poor marks in exams if they do not intend to go to those teachers for coaching. Why is coaching essential when students are attentively participating in the classes? Only commercial minded teachers are not to be blamed. The mindset of both students and parents is also the reason behind this nuisance. The school authorities as well as the education ministry must take proper initiatives and make regulations in prohibiting private coaching.

Khondoker Rezwan Tanvir
Department of Business Administration
Shahjalal University of Science and Technology
Sylhet

Rehab fair

Rehab (Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh) fair at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, Dhaka, was well organised and attractive. But it is a fair for the affluent people. Can the middle class and poor people afford to purchase Rehab land and apartments? Why does not Rehab make arrangements and sell land and flats for the poor and middle class people with a view to mitigating their untold sufferings.

We would request Rehab to kindly pay attention to the needs and necessities of the poor and middle class people.

O. H. Kabir
Dhaka



S. SARWAR / DRINKNEWS

Population census: Information discord?

The fifth population census has been conducted after ten years in 2011. It is impossible to deny the significance of population census in the development of a country. The researchers, planners, businessmen, learners, even the politicians of home and abroad are using the data and information of the census as the tools or raw materials for their research. If there is any discrepancy in the data and information, the entire work plan will be challenged. According to the preliminary findings of the population and housing census 2011, Bangladesh's population now stands at 14.23 crore which has created debates among the experts and is not in line with the

UNICEF, UNDP and other reports. Other reports showed that our population is more than 16 crore. Due to the negligence of the field workers in visiting every house, the reliability of the report is being questioned. Needless to say that the information of the census is vital in preparing ADP or other economic plans. The controversy about the population census is unexpected.

Md. Shahjahan Ali
MSS
Department of Public Administration
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All lies

After almost about a year we came back to Houston, Texas in order to retain our residency in the United States. In order to begin living once again in our host country, we had to do a lot of shopping. While staying in Bangladesh for the last one year we experienced a great price spiral of essential commodities. The regime in power blamed the price hike on the international market. To my utter dismay, I found most of the things selling at the price that I found a year ago. Only the gasoline price has doubled, yet it is cheaper compared to Bangladesh. Apart from this, the price hike is very nominal, for example, the bread that we used to buy from Walmart for 80 cents now sells for a dollar. In general, the price hike of essential commodities here in Texas is like this.

Back at home the government blames the international market for the price hike. If this were really true, then likewise price of things here in Texas would also have doubled as it did in Bangladesh, when most of the things are imported from China and other countries. It has now become clear to me that the politicians back at home are prolific liars. I wonder when the 160 million people shall become free of these political demagogues.

Saleh Ayub
On e-mail

Constitution - a sacred document

There is no doubt that for a secular country the constitution is a scared document. As such, perhaps various oaths of office may be administered by the copy of the constitution rather than a religious scripture, as the office bearers come from various faiths.

Engineer Shafi Ahmed

Dragon fruit now in shopping malls!



PHOTO: STAR

Dragon fruit, a new type of fruit has now entered into city's leading shopping malls. Dragon fruit (Hylocereous undatus) is a member of Cacti or Cactaceae family native to Central America, now grown in many parts of the world including Bangladesh. The fruit is tasty and has nutritious values. It contains a good amount of vitamin C, B, minerals such as Calcium, etc. Dragon fruit is a rich source of antioxidant which prevents cancer. The fruit also helps in reducing blood cholesterol and blood sugar. Among many other qualities Dragon fruit helps in reducing body weight.

In fact, Prof. Dr. Abdur Rahim, Director, Germplasm Center, Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh had brought this fruit to Bangladesh and started researching on Dragon fruit in 2007 to examine up to what extent this fruit could be adapted under the soil and climatic condition of Bangladesh. And he came out successful in growing Dragon fruit in



Bangladesh. Now that two types of Dragon fruit, red and white received certification from the relevant government department. Some private farms have started growing and marketing Dragon fruits commercially; concerned farms should distribute leaflets highlighting the content, nutritional values plus consumption process of this fruit through their sale outlets.

And to expand cultivation of Dragon fruits, the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) may undertake a project to popularize Dragon fruits and to keep on surveying the market of this new fruits so that farmers may not sustain loss after cultivating Dragon fruits on their lands.
Professor M Zahidul Haque
Department of Agricultural Extension & Information System
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University
Dhaka

Parents ought to be careful

I have noticed that the habit of smoking is increasing substantially. It is not that the adults only smoke, the young boys, especially the teenagers are also smoking significantly. Whenever I go to Gulshan I see that the young boys are smoking in groups on roadsides and in restaurants, even though 'no smoking' is written in those places, creating disturbance to the general people. It is so shocking that 10-12 year-old boys smoke freely in front of elders. So, I would suggest the parents to keep an eye on their children so that they do not smoke and keep themselves away from harmful habits. I also request the government to ban advertisements of cigarettes in public places.

Antar Chowdhury
Gopibagh
Dhaka

Stop this inhuman practice

There exists a bad practice in our politics, whenever any political leader or a minister or an MP visits any place, to give a show off the school kids are forced to stand on both sides of the streets, with flags and flowers. Instead of attending classes they are obliged to welcome the 'special' people, standing in sun, rain, cold and storm. It is mandatory for the school kids. It is inhumane and medieval.

Sidd, Toffy, Sophia and Neel
On e-mail

Save the young

generation

If the root of a tree is cut off, the possibility of blooming flower will nip in the bud. Similarly, if our young generation goes astray, then our future will be uncertain. Youths are involving themselves in many illegal activities like addiction, eve-teasing, hijacking, stealing, etc. The reasons behind their addiction are bad company, poverty, bad parenting, availability of drugs etc. In order to save them from this path, parents as well as government should take required steps.

Mrittunjoy Dhali
Bachelor of Business Administration

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Saturday's The Daily Star report headlined "Political decisions vs business"

Anonymous

Good reporting regarding politicians' interest and national requirement for financial discipline. We cannot guess who are the sponsors of these 15 new banks in Bangladesh. Do they belong to political party high ups, or those who whitened black money? Where will these banks be opened, urban or rural areas?

Shaikh Rafiqul Islam

Just one point to be noted for the new directors of the new banks, have they paid proper tax, which they want to invest in banking business? Where is our Income Tax and NBR? I am sure; this point is not considered now. But this point should be well settled against each person who is going to be a director. The amount must be white with tax paid.

SNH

British and the West European nations want US image as a world power to demise. I don't know why, though! Currently, Brisbane powered Australia and Alberta powered Canada are emerging as the new Anglophone economic frontiers/influential political realms. On the other hand, Texans are losing the grip; the lone stars are really alone in the quest of global supremacy. British trimmed down their Anglo (Irish)-German dreams. China is a great show today, won't be that juicy on the days next.

Sohel

The country has 48 banks plus non-banking financial institutions acting as bank by taking deposits from public, then why another 15 more banks? Lion's share of population living outside of the cities is not using these traditional banks and on the other hand these banks do not have a wide variety of products and services to earn revenues to sustain. My question to finance minister is how these banks are making money to cover their costs?

Abu Rayhan

Thanks Mr. Ahmed for presenting such an in-depth analysis. Most of our politicians do politics at the cost of people. Now they are out in force to make their way into banking business at the cost of the economy. Any reckless decision in this regard will make the economy suffer for a longer term. Also it might set precedence for any future political interference in the state's routine economic affairs. In fact any decision that a government makes should only serve the collective interests of the state.

Partial judges !

Mirakkel 6 is now being telecast by Zee Bangla, I watch this programme regularly because it is very entertaining and also because there are participants from Bangladesh. I am really happy noticing that Bangladeshi participants are doing very well but at the same time disappointed noticing that they are not getting due recognition.

The judges are Paran Bandopaddhay, Srilekha Mitra and Rajotabha Dutt. To me they sometimes seem partial. A few days ago a participant who was from Bangladesh (I forgot the name of the participant) told a joke which was hilarious. It was about his plane journey with an elderly man, whom he called, "Cha Cha".

I was sure that he would become first in that episode and get 25 thousand rupees which the best performer gets, but to my surprise it was divided by four and the other three recipients were from India. We hope the judges will act impartially in the future, and the show will hold its reputation.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong

Sonia's tour and border killing

The arrival of India's Congress party president Sonia Gandhi in Bangladesh was an auspicious sign for bilateral relationship between the two neighbouring countries. She attended a conference on autistic and disabled children as chief guest and also received "Bangladesh Freedom Honour" award from the government on behalf of her late mother-in-law Indira Gandhi. I hope that this visit will play a significant role in boosting our political and economic relation with India. But it is regretful that Indian border security force BSF has killed one Bangladeshi on the day of her arrival. Any problem can be solved through negotiation. I urge the authorities concerned to reach an agreement and implement that properly so that no such border killing occurs in future.

Md. Mirazul Islam
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