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Save the families depending on rickshaw!

A man getting out of his car and slapping a rickshaw-driver right and left only because the three-wheeler touched his car's bumper is a very common scene in Bangladesh. Dhaka is known as the city of rickshaws. Even so, rickshaws are neglected everywhere in Bangladesh. Traffic police hit the rickshaws when they are parked in wrong places but when it comes to a car, they say nothing or if at all, they say something very politely to the driver. Now, it is a matter of great regret that rickshaws are banned on the 'major' streets. Some people even think that rickshaws should be banned from our country! It is said that nearly 80% of the labourers are rickshawallahs. Where will they go with their families? Just look at the poor and hungry faces in the streets! I urge the wealthy people and their drivers- please kind to the rickshaw-drivers when he accidentally hits your car's bumper.

Shafeen Mahmood
Class IX (commerce)
Little Jewels School
Chittagong



PHOTO: STAR

Cabinet in limbo

In 2008 election, I voted for AL-led grand alliance. I shall again vote for them in 2014 election, be it under caretaker or interim government. The present Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is working hard to change the fate of the common people. Our export has increased, agricultural production has also increased. Development in education and social sectors are recognisable. But many of the cabinet colleagues of the premier are not performing well. As a concerned citizen, I strongly feel that a cabinet reshuffle is overdue. The finance minister, perhaps due to age constraints, should not be burdened with such a big ministry. Law ministry's performance is not up to the mark. The communications minister with his innocent smile has already

become a burden to the government. Home and commerce ministries also need overhauling. The lone representative of Jatiyo Party may be given a more important job as he has a little to perform in that ministry. And shipping minister should mind his own business.

Now it is time for performance. The alliance government needs another term to fulfil the pledges like good governance, women empowerment, economic emancipation, social justice, and trial of war crimes. Two years' time is enough to lead the nation to the path of hope. It is necessary to revamp the administration. Honourable Prime Minister, we believe you can do it. Please do it early.

A concerned citizen
Uttara Model Town, Dhaka

A historic football match

The international friendly match between Argentina and Nigeria, which took place at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on 6th September overwhelmed the football lovers of Bangladesh. Undoubtedly, it



AFP

was a historic match.

I would like to express my profound thanks and gratitude to the BFF president Kazi Salahuddin along with his other staff members for making it happen. I believe that it will be helpful to reawaken the football of Bangladesh. The spectators enjoyed the performance of superstar Lionel Messi and expressed their joy during the match.

We hope that this kind of match will be held in the future again. We thank the Argentina and Nigeria football teams for playing such a wonderful match in Bangladesh.

Ratan Munmu
Dhaka

Preliminary screening

Students who have just passed the HSC Exams are now passing through very critical days of their life as far as their getting admitted to any institution of higher education is concerned. They will now sit for admission tests. The government universities and medical colleges allow a very large number of students to sit for admission tests. On the other hand, varsities like BUET, CUET, KUET, RUET screen off quite a large number of students by short-listing. Since they take high standard admission tests, if a student can do well in those tests, that would prove his/her eligibility for studying in a particular institution. The students who could not do well in the HSC exams for various reasons, can do well in the admission test. So I earnestly appeal to the authorities concerned to give a second thought to their existing screening tests.

Tushar Kanti Das
Chittagong

Proposed MRT route

I am extremely disturbed by the undesirable debates and objections raised by the air force chief at this stage, which can delay the most important project for our capital. The route was approved by the cabinet on 8th March. This kind of "objection" by many agencies was the root cause for delay and/or cancellation of many important and vital projects in the past. I would like to put my points in support of the "approved" project. The project is of utmost national interest, so no delays should be allowed and the change will seriously damage the aesthetic view of our national pride, the Sangsad Bhaban.

Air force chief's comment "even a mosque can be demolished for the benefit of the people" is interesting. Of course I agree with the hadith. But the Sangsad Bhaban can not be moved or damaged in any way, instead the runway can be moved out of Dhaka if it's against the people's interest.

Let's move the airstrip outside Dhaka and convert it into a national park, like they have it in New York (Central Park) or London (Hyde Park). Similar steps should be taken for shifting BGB (former BDR) outside Dhaka from Pilkhana and turning it into a park for the benefit of the nation. Even a plan should be made to move Dhaka Cantonment outside Dhaka. Many countries of the world have moved their capital for the benefit of the people.

I urge our pro-people Prime Minister to take the right decision in saving our Sangsad Bhaban.

M Alam
Dhaka

Greek debt

For most of the past decade, Greece has run up budget deficits well beyond limits set by the European Union, a group of 27 nations that allow goods and workers to cross their borders freely. When Greece fell into recession two years ago, bondholders worried they wouldn't get their money back. To make sure they do, the EU is lending money to Greece, essentially allowing it to use new debt to pay off old debt. Greece looks like a bad bet. Its publicly held debt is more than 140 percent of its annual economic output, or gross domestic product. The US debt is 67 percent.

Greece is a tiny player in Europe. It has a \$305 billion economy, about the size of Maryland's and 2 percent of the whole EU's. And if it does default, it will have plenty of company. In the past 30 years, 20 European and Latin American countries have stiffed their creditors, some repeatedly. The list includes Turkey in 1982, Mexico in 1994, Russia in 1998 and Argentina in 2001.

Most important: If Greece defaults, investors will worry that too much larger EU members, Italy and Spain, might follow. For the US, a European recession would come at an especially bad time. Europe buys about 20 percent of the US exports. And exports have been a big driver of the US economic growth recently. With the US slowing, it can't afford a downturn in such a crucial market. "It's not just a country floating out there that happens to default," says Steve H. Hanke, an economist at Johns Hopkins University. "The whole monetary union gets thrown into doubt."

Ted Rudow III, MA
Encina Ave, Palo Alto, CA



PHOTO: STAR

Kitchen gardens within households

Monitoring the prices of daily commodities such as the vegetables are short-term solutions. What is needed is improving transportation and having better state-of-the-art storage facilities and buffering. As the vegetables that are affected are those that are easy to grow, another novel solution is to encourage the concept of kitchen gardens in the households. Let us not forget what rainwater harvesting did. Kitchen gardens will also ensure pesticide-free, fresh vegetables at affordable prices. In times of crisis, innovation is the key.

Gopal Sengupta
Canada

Indo-Bangladesh relations

The readers failed to notice two important factors during and after the recent visit of the Indian Prime Minister to Dhaka.

The geographical location of Bangladesh: it is surrounded by India in the West and in the East; with the high Himalayas in the North, and the Bay of Bengal in the South. Under such caged conditions, the foreign policy of Bangladesh has to be updated and fine-tuned on a long-term basis, for an independent and prosperous living . The cage door must be kept open; but under what conditions?

India does not have normal friendly relations with her neighbouring countries. The Kashmir issue is lingering since 1947 along with Pakistan; while Nepal and Bhutan are land-locked, countries in the Himalayas. North-East India is isolated due to lack of connectivity; therefore it is difficult to govern it in a normal manner.

Bangladesh lies in a deltaic region, full of rivers. It has high soil fertility but the construction of dams upstream in neighbouring countries impedes the natural flow of waters.

The density of population in Bangladesh is one of the highest in the world, approaching 1,000 persons per sq km (over-population is not recognised or encouraged by nature). Dhaka's political governance started from zero in 1947 (East Pakistan), and again from 1971 (Bangladesh), while India enjoyed continuity, which makes governance easier, although it is a vast country. The communal issues now cropping up seem to be artificial.

Indo-Bangla friendly relations have to be looked at from these perspectives of historical and geographical significance. Hence political initiatives have to be more judicious and long-term ones. Many elder citizens are still sceptical about the sudden partition of British India.

A Mawaz
Dhaka

Relentless load shedding

The government, as we all know, has taken some prudent steps to improve the power situation. Ironically, nowadays it seems all those efforts are just gimmicks to misguide the citizens into believing that the situation is getting better. The scorching heat, with the added predicament of massive power failures, has rendered the lives of the people unbearable. People are trying to fathom what all those apparently substantial steps are providing us with. All our efforts to understand the enigma end in futility. We all expected a better power situation through all those efforts. But now it seems that no efforts were made whatsoever. They were just machinations to garner Forex.

Rafi Abdullah
North South University
Dhaka



PHOTO: STAR



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DOCTOR for the poor

Kiwi living his dream in Bangladesh, providing healthcare to the helpless for close to 30 years
September 19, 2011

Hats off to Dr Baker.
Zahid

Such a great person deserves to be recognized and awarded nationally.
Saiful

This is how the Christian missionary works. Good work, Dr Baker. I salute your dedication.
Shabbir Choudhury

All our elderly physicians may follow this example and set up a similar programme at their village homes!
Mohammad

We should learn from his devotion. We leave Bangladesh for New Zealand and he has

left NZ for us.
M. Ziaul Haque

Some of our specialists charge as high as Tk 900 from each patient. Only God knows why they still need to earn so much when they have already earned enough, even for their grand children. After reading this report, if they have shame, they should now treat patients for free!
Motin

This is an amazing story! How come no one knows of Eric Baker outside of Madhupur? These are the real examples of great souls. May be our own medical graduates can learn from here what faith and dedication is.

Syed Imtiaz Ali

If I were the chief of the Bangladesh doctors or medical association, I would print out this page and hang on the walls of every hospital and medical college under me for inspiration for all. Serving humanity is the greatest religious act.
Naser samad

I am so excited reading this wonderful story. It just reminds me again that we have so many opportunities to do in our country and yet we can't or, better put, don't see those. Hope we Bangladeshis could learn something from this great man.
Shahnewaz

He gives up a life of comfort, learns Bangla to better serve his patients and also raises funds from abroad to run his medical centre. Such a selfless, compassionate and dedicated soul comes once in a millennium. He deserves not only our admiration and respect but also the nation's highest civilian award.
Abdus Samad

A lot of greetings to the doctor who has been giving treatment to the poor people of

Bangladesh almost for free, not being a Bangladeshi. There are lots of doctors in our country, but no doctor is coming forward to treat the poor people at a lower rate or free of cost. Other doctors should learn from Dr Edric Baker.

MM Hemel

Dr Baker is an asset for humanity in general. There are people like him all over the world. And their dedication to others is like a ray of hope amidst constant chaos. However, I think Bangladesh should offer him either citizenship or permanent residency, so that he does not need to go to NZ every year for visa extension.

Tirtho Mahmud

What an example Dr Edric Baker has set before us! This is an eye-opener for many commercial doctors in our country. I am saddened by the fact that not a single TV channel covered his story or focused on him. He should be put on live every week if electronic media want to play an effective role in teaching humanity and dedication in our societies! Thanks to The Daily Star for covering the news. Better late than never. I request you to continue your focus on him and other such stories in our country.