

Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 150 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

Teesta water

Kolkata's The Telgraph of 5 September 2011 has printed an interesting map under the headline "Didi Dams bursts on Delhi". Salient features of the map are reproduced below:

The Teesta rises in the Dzongu Glacier in Sikkim and flows for 315 km. India is building the Rambhi Dam near Kalimpong, and the Kalijhora dam a few kms downstream. In Jalpaiguri, the Gajoldoba barrage is already in operation conserving the Teesta waters to feed the Teesta canal that presently irrigates 60,000 hectares but will eventually irrigate 9.22 lacs hectares. No shortage of water here! The diverted Teesta canal contains so much water that a hydel project is in operation at the Phansidewa Dam near Siliguri where it takes a sharp turn southwards into West Bengal, within striking distance of Tetulia in Bangladesh.

The questions arise: what quantity of water is 30% we get now, vis-à-vis 50% that we expected? After feeding 4 dams and a huge irrigation canal in India, what amount of water trickles down the Teesta into Bangladesh? Do our water experts know how much is 50% of 0? Why there is no mention of Feni River?

Also bear in mind that all Himalayan glaciers are melting fast. How long will the small Dzongu last?

Sikander Ahmed
Niketon, Gulshan-1 Dhaka

US dollar getting weak

US dollar, the most powerful currency throughout the world, is losing its power. Even the Americans get worried and frustrated when they visit currency exchange dealers in Japan, Australia, Singapore and Thailand, because they receive fewer notes in exchange for their renowned currency. But why is this currency becoming weaker? Is it not possible to check inflation in the United States, the most powerful country in the world?

Michael Rahman
Gulshan, Dhaka



S SARWAR/ DRINKNEWS

Population bomb

Bangladesh is now sitting on a population bomb! It is a time bomb which may explode anytime! Signs are conspicuous. A gigantic population of 160 million is jam-packed in a very small area with a population density of nearly 1200 per sq km. The consequence is disastrous. Half of the population is starving. Cultivable land is dwindling. Prices of essentials are soaring up. Supply is always falling short of demand. Ever-growing hungry population has been eating up all our development efforts! Nearly a quarter of the population is living in the slums. An endless flow of rural

people is overcrowding the towns and cities for food. Law and order is breaking down.

Population growth rate has to be brought down to zero within the shortest possible time. It is now 1.4% while it is 0.9% in Sri Lanka and 0.5% in the Maldives. God knows why our governments have failed to give top-most priority to Family Planning. Time is running out, the bomb is ticking! We must stop it before we perish!

Md. Mohsin Ali
Nutan Courtpara Kushtia

Price hike

The fuel price is increasing day by day. And we have to buy every commodity at a high price as the price of every item is related to the price of fuel. The government and the private companies are not increasing the employees' salary in comparison with the price of the daily necessary commodities. So, people get involved in corruption to earn some extra money.

Md. Moniruzzaman Hemel
Akur Takur Muslim Para Tangail

Separate the railways

& roads ministries

The railway network has been politically neglected since 1972. The roads and highways are attractive, in a negative way, to some of the political masters. The IWT sector (in this deltaic region) has not achieved the priority it deserves. Our ports are being expanded too slowly (now that the transit issue is 'on').

The cabinet is full of Advisors. The working style of the section officers in the secretariat needs to be updated (too much pen-pushing, causing bureau-

cratic delays, in the old colonial style).

The district and divisional headquarters have practically no administrative powers; as most people have to come to capital Dhaka to complete their assignments. Bangladesh is a small country, but the density of population is one of the highest in the world. The work load on Dhaka is too much. Dhaka would die if not decentralised, (the MPs don't like it).

Decentralisation is the cheapest way to develop fast; but the political masters have different views. Take a simple example: the government cannot run the taxis and auto-rickshaws using the fare meters. Many roads are banned to the cycle rickshaws, the main conveyance for the majority (and the students) for short distances. There is a lust for mega projects. The shifting of the air force strip from the DCC zone would ease road traffic jams and allow the international airport to expand.

The politicians are not interested in the technical details of daily operation and maintenance (O&M), Public address systems are not the short cuts to popularity and practical development.

There is one huge gap: lack of national consensus on common issues.

A Mawaz, Dhaka



MAHABUB ALAM KHAN / DRINKNEWS

Hartal and democracy

No doubt hartal is a democratic tool to protest undemocratic actions of the government, but its undemocratic use violates the democratic system. The purpose of hartal should be to ensure people's interest through its proper and peaceful use. Calling hartal without any logical reason is undemocratic and unacceptable. In our country hartal is called not for the betterment of the people, rather it is used by the politicians to gain personal benefits. The government should perform its duty well so that the opposition parties fail to call any hartal on any illogical

ground. We expect that our government would refrain from dealing with questionable national issues and think about the consequences of their action. The opposition parties should also avoid anarchy and vandalism in the name of observing hartal. The government and the opposition should work hand in hand to restore true democracy in our country.

Md. Nurnobi Islam
Dept. of Marketing University of Dhaka

Come clean before the catadlysm

How helpless we are before the hidden and sudden disasters-- both natural and man-made! A bolt of thunder shakes our hearts, a disease suddenly takes away our ease and ultimately drags us to the dark grave, the wall of water powered by quake plays with our lives and dwellings as if we are toys at the hands of nature. The molten lava put a hard layer of death over the lavish lives of Pompeii, then in our time fire lapped up the lives of 3 thousand people at the twin tower, and the resultant violence engulfed millions of lives and properties worth trillions of dollars. Caught unaware, people are dying on land, water and air. Sudden deaths give them no time to repent. But what is most surprising to me is that life goes on. Here it may seem the sun is setting but there it is rising. The zeal for life is indomitable. It seems nothing can tear us from its amorous grip. A short while ago, we were running for life and uttering the name of the Creator but now we are again in the lap of seductive world. Again we indulge in age-old rivalries and political wrangling. Have we no time to ponder our ephemeral pomp and power? Cannot we sit together and hammer our differences out to build a peaceful and prosperous society? It is high time we responded to our conscience and come clean before the catadlysm overpowers us.

Abdus Subhan
Assistant Professor Ishwardi Govt. College

Failure of Manmohan's visit

We are shocked at the outcome of the long awaited visit of Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to Dhaka. Isn't it strange and funny that instead of signing Teesta water sharing treaty, which is a matter of life and death for millions of Bangladeshi people, a MoU on conservation of Royal Bengal Tigers has been signed? The political leaders and bureaucrats of both India and Bangladesh need to improve their efficiency, morality, vision and sincerity. We should all take lesson from the Indian Prime Minister's recent visit.

O.H. Kabir



AFP

Social unrest around the world

In recent times, a series of mass protests are gripping notably UK, Spain, Italy, Greece, Egypt, Israel, India and numerous other countries around the world.

As a septuagenarian my considered opinion is that this is the outcome of accumulated anger stoked up by perennial poverty, deprivation, disparity, exclusion and marginalization in societies. The outburst is overtly directed against the persons in power for their misrule, corruption, nepotism, arrogance and denial to provide for the minimum. The unprece-

dented riots across England are found to be caused by the "social selfishness" of the "insulated haves... and their regular denigration of the poor."

It is highly relevant here to mention that this is an early wake-up call for the politicians, especially those at the helm of the government to take a cue from these happenings before it is too late.

SA Samad
General Manager (Retd.) Janata Bank Bara Moghbazar, Dhaka

READERS

respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Sunday's The Daily Star report headlined "PM offers peace model".

Anonymous

To the members of the United Nations: You have heard the prime minister of Bangladesh giving a peace model. Please come to Bangladesh and see for yourself how peaceful the country is!

Mahbub Mansur Emon

The prime minister's six-point peace model is really fantastic and praiseworthy. It's easy to give advice but it's hard to achieve the goals.

Ryan

Isn't it a bit ironic? Can't she speak to the opposition leader at home first, before lecturing about world peace?

SG

Her words on the international issues are words from a real leader; it is bold and demanding. Thank you, Prime Minister. However, more important are the internal issues of our country such as poverty, price hike, corruption and so on. Honourable PM, I hope you would concentrate more on these issues and fix these.

Mike

The PM of Bangladesh should be the last person to speak about peace and poverty. I've lived in Bangladesh and never seen so many underprivileged people suppressed by a few privileged people. The rich in Bangladesh should be ashamed of themselves and the PM should resign and make way for the people with a good heart to lead the country.

Anonymous

The prime minister has proposed a very sensible model for world development. If the UN takes action on those 6 issues, the world will be a much better place to live in. But instead of waiting for the United Nations to do this job, she should implement this in her own country. She should review the present situation to make plans and implement them immediately without waiting for anybody to do these for her country.

Faqrul

No doubt it is a good piece of speech. The political vision in the speech is unclear with regard to handling the current international focus point of crisis and financial uncertainty. On the other hand, just look at the brief news item on the right side in which the Indian prime minister addresses the most talked about issue on Middle East peace - a proposal of Palestine statehood by their president and supported by the Indian prime minister having no ambiguity.

A reader

The people behind the drafting of these six points with the idea of it being proposed by the honorable PM of our country in the UN general assembly must have been overenthusiastic by their sycophantic instincts so much so that they forgot about the venue where it has to be proposed and of the people assembled there. Presumably they got carried away to such an extent that they even forgot it was not a gathering of the poor Bangladeshi commoners but of those people who are far more aware of the anatomy of Bangladesh, its politicians and its politics.

Fida Likhon

Try to eradicate the corruption in Bangladesh which is known as one of the most corrupt countries in the world and then come up to become a world leader. Please avoid any delusion of being big under the influence of some big power, because they behave differently in time of their own need. The Middle East is itself a glaring example of what they can do.

Bangladesh needs first to develop itself economically to the level of the fast growing economies like India, before claiming its place among the countries that matter to the world powers. And to become a world power, we better leave that to the future when we can propose something to the world. But unfortunately, we are very far behind India in terms of economy, science and technology!

Use of hydraulic horns

It has been observed that most of the trucks and buses plying Dhaka streets, highways and other towns of Bangladesh use hydraulic horns constantly. The loud noises of these horns cause great disturbance to the people exposed to those. The drivers of these vehicles do not care about the people and constantly blow their horns while driving the vehicles.

Unfortunately, our law enforcing agencies do not take any action against the drivers who use hydraulic horns. We, therefore, suggest that the traffic department should check all heavy vehicles including trucks and buses to stop the use of hydraulic horns for public interest.

Md. A. Alim
Eskaton Road, Dhaka

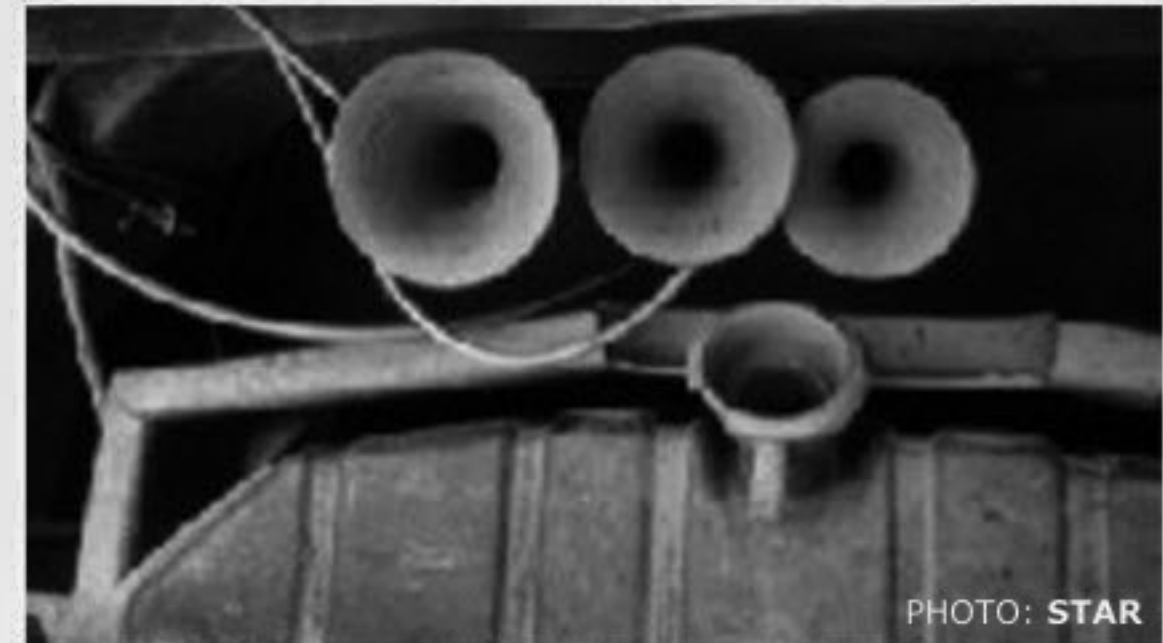


PHOTO: STAR