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Attain zero population growth for survival

Bangladesh may be well compared to a boat which is overburdened with passengers far beyond its capacity. A population of 160 million is virtually huddled up in a country having a land surface of 143998 sq. km., man-land ratio being less than 2 decimals per head! Population growth rate is still 1.4%! This ever-increasing population is causing unimaginable harm to ecology as well as our social life. Cultivable land is shrinking, forestry is dwindling, water is becoming scarce and polluted. Our country is trapped in a vicious circle of problems like acute poverty, unemployment, food shortage, inadequate housing and sanitation, widespread diseases and social unrest.

Time is running out fast! The government must identify and recognise overpopulation as the number one problem. A separate family planning ministry has to take charge of implementing a comprehensive population policy having a time frame for achieving zero growth rate. Time-bound phase-wise programmes have to be completed at any cost to reach the goal. Then only, our sinking boat will rise above water and start floating!

Md. Mohsin Ali
Senior Assistant Secretary (Retd.)
Nutan Courtpara
Kushitia



PRITO REZA / DRIKNEWS

BNP should rethink dialogue stand

The entire nation was more or less certain about the outcome of the president's initiative to help resolve the issue of Election Commission reconstitution. But BNP's quick and outright rejection of the process proposed by the president watered down the hopes and aspiration of the nation. Had BNP taken it positively with suggestions for improvement, the president would have felt encouraged to make a move about the caretaker government restoration issue, and the nation could see the light at the end of the tunnel.

We would like to request BNP to reconsider its stand and propose a process to find the prospective Election Commissioners. Then BNP can talk to the president about the caretaker government issue and people will stand behind them, and the president would feel obliged to respond positively.

Abu Shahjalal Azad
Dhanmondi RA, Dhaka



PHOTO: STAR

An appeal to the communications minister

Yet another tragic event, an accident in Bandarban on January 14, 2012, has taken place as a bus fell into a rocky gorge killing 17 people and injuring 25. Road accidents have become a routine incident, every day numerous accidents are happening taking a huge toll. But no concrete step has been taken as yet to reduce the number and frequency such deaths.

Faulty vehicles and inexperienced drivers are mostly responsible; dilapidated roads and reckless driving also play a part. It has been disclosed that 50% driving licenses are fake and unfit vehicles are plying the roads because it is easy to get fitness certificate in exchange for money.

Communications Minister Obaidul Kader said to Prothom Alo that he had inspected the vehicles in the capital and found that 80% of those are not road-worthy and the documents are false. The fact is staggering; no wonder that accidents are happening so often.

We request the communications minister to take urgent steps to curb road accidents, and we hope with his sincere efforts he will be able to achieve it.

Nur Jahan, Chittagong



PHOTO: STAR

A former president responds...

First of all, accept my sincere thanks and New Year's greetings to your distinguished readers. On a personal note, I have always stamped my heartiest admiration for your esteemed daily that complements my daily schedule. Of course, your thoughtful comments sometimes spark my curiosity, and a little dismay, which never down-rated my trust in the freedom of the press. Today, I am reflecting my note of disappointment on a post-editorial penned by a true gentleman and journalist par excellence, Syed Badrul Ahsan, on 4 January 2012.

He made some very interesting observations about me and my administration which is commendable and forthright. Mr Editor, may I revisit the comment? I quote from Syed Badrul Ahsan... "He is one of the few military dictators to have survived a big fall and live to fight another day. That should not have been the case." He went on: "by any measure of political logic, he ought to have gone for retirement."

Now, my good friend aptly tagged it with the tenure of Field Marshal Ayub Khan. Yes, President Ayub Khan retired under political duress at that time. But he (President Ayub Khan) handed over power to the institution he had proudly served and admired. Mine was totally different. Yes, the political scenario may have been similar, but my stance taken then was democratic, legal and acceptable to all major political parties.

I handed over power to a civilian administration, headed by a former Chief Justice, appointed by me and acceptable to all. I did not (like President Ayub Khan) hand power to the institution that I have served as army chief. I hope this will dispel the misunderstanding of Syed Badrul Ahsan, and of many of his loyal readers. My resignation was democratic and not autocratic.

By the grace of God, I am fortunate like my distinguished friends in politics to serve our motherland, to the best of my ability. I do admire democracy to be at the forefront of nurturing people's voice in the interest of people's power. I am happy that they have inspired me in exercising and practising democracy, even in a state of political turmoil and transition.

Great leaders like Bangabandhu, Shere Bangla AK Fazlul Huq, Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy and Maulana Bhashani lighted my path in rekindling trust and confidence in the grand pulpit of democracy. Throughout my life I have learned the traits of being earnest --- in respecting my friends and foes and giving due respect to the noble value of politeness.

Need for an overbridge

Every day I go to my office at Gazipur by using the Board Bazar road. I see many garment workers are crossing the road dangerously at a time when a lot of vehicles ply the road. Road accident is a common scene on this road. We draw the kind attention of the authorities concerned to build an overbridge here to save lives.

S. M. Imranul Islam Rajon
Dhaka

PM's quote in school textbooks

Getting textbooks at the beginning of the year is very exciting for students. The incumbent education minister deserves thanks for taking this initiative. In the past, books reached some areas even in March or April.

My daughter Aishi, who reads in class VIII, is also very happy to get her books so early. The paper used in the books is also better. But I think there is much scope to improve the quality of the books regarding subject matter, picture, binding, etc.

On the back of each book, there is an important quotation which is very inspiring to the students. Undoubtedly, students will develop their values and morality by learning these wise sayings. But since this government came to power, we have been seeing an additional quotation from our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the books. Is it not a political matter? If a new government comes to power in the future, will we see another prime minister's saying on the pages of these books?

This year the books of Social Science have completely changed. In the last chapter of the Social Science book of class VIII, there are topics on different international organisations like the United Nations Organization, NAM, OIC, EU, African Union, ASEAN, but I am disappointed not to see the name of SAARC there.

Harun-or-Rashid
Mohammadpur
Dhaka



Readers' instant comments on The Daily Star Online reports. Log on to thedailystar.net to leave your comments.

Tortured for not paying 'bribe'
BSF suspends 8 jawans
(January 19, 2012)

The world now can see why and how so many Bangladeshis are dying on the border. We want to see how the Bangladesh government reacts to this incident.

Saleh-Rahim Ahmed

At last the Indian media came up with the issue.

Azim

We should install video devices along the borders so that we can capture evidences of BSF brutality. Only evidence will stop the Indians, as they want

to project themselves as a benevolent democratic power in the international media.

RCH

Our prime minister should talk to the Indian prime minister about this atrocity by the BSF immediately and the accused BSF personnel should be punished.

Rafiq

Again the BSF has shown their barbaric attitude to the Bangladeshi people. Now let's see how our prime minister and

foreign minister react to this issue. We condemn such heinous activities of BSF.

Shibli

Is this the symbol of friendship between Awami League government and India?

Lenin H Chow

Do not use the word 'alleged'. He indeed was a Bangladeshi national. Hope smuggling will reduce now due to fear.

Muntasir Mamun

The heading should have been different and display our bold position against BSF atrocities, as this kind of incident happens regularly and not paying bribe can only be a small reason behind the tortures.

Russel

This time they at least did not kill the man, what they usually do to our poor countrymen. But as the Indian TV channels

broadcast the footage now, the Indian government may take some steps this time, at least we hope so. If we had the footage of killing Felani, the teenage girl who was raped and killed and then thrown away by the BSF men, and her dead body was hanging from the barbed wire on the border, we could have taken the issue to the international forums for a permanent solution to the problem and punishment of the BSF soldiers involved.

A worried citizen

The BSF is killing and torturing our people at the border areas and the BCL (Bangladesh Chhatra League) is killing and torturing our people inside the country. Everywhere people are the victims.

Morshed

We urge the government to do something urgently to save the people living in border areas.

Anika

Buses violating traffic rules



PHOTO: STAR

I am writing this as a complaint against BRTC buses that stop on the Mohakhali flyover to pick and drop passengers without caring about the hindrance they cause to the traffic flow behind. Buses should not use the flyovers since all motor vehicles are not supposed to stop on them except in case of emergency. Bus drivers break rules, they behave as if the roads belong to them. They must be stopped from doing so by the authorities. I request the authorities to kindly ensure that buses stop only at designated bus stops. They must also pull over at the kerb instead of stopping on the middle of the road, sometimes diagonally, causing serious traffic jam.

Aminur Rahim
New DOHS
Mohakhali, Dhaka