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PHOTO: STAR

Sky high Dhaka land prices!

An illuminating observation about the matter, published in the front page of a local English daily on 18th. January, is a fact of life in Dhaka today. It is not going to change in the foreseeable future. A very logical and important reason for this was unfortunately not touched upon by the writer.

Basically, it is because we have gone for horizontal rather than vertical building policy as decided by our authorities. Hence prices of land and rents for buildings and flats are going higher, primarily for residential accommodation. By limiting the heights of the buildings, we have limited the number of people living per square foot of built up land area of the building.

Just for example, in a five storied building having five flats of say 2500 sft. area, we have eight people living; then for the built up floor area of 2500sft. we have a total of 5X8=40 people living; which works out to 62.5sft. built up floor area per person. If the building was double the

height, with 10 flats, then the floor area per person would have come down to 31.25 sft! If only the rules for height allowed for buildings can be relaxed and increased, then in Dhaka we could have twice the number of people living per sft. of built up area! However, the reality is that our position regarding water supply and electricity is inadequate right now. So the outcome would have been just more misery! Why can't we have facilities for increased supply of power and potable water, say twice the projected need?

Only then we may live reasonably in high-rises for the next decade at least! It only underscores the need for added provision for basic needs like water and power; which should be the first priority for financial allocation; possibly higher than education and health care; which can be met by the private sector.

S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Are we at the mercy of India?

The recent situation in Bangladesh may provide an answer to the above question. Every day a Bangladeshi native is being brutally tortured by the Indian BSF. And not only ordinary people, a BGB soldier also fell into the hands of BSF. It is also being observed that the Indian government, through BSF, has been grabbing our lands and making thousands of our people homeless.

Nowadays our young generation seems to be addicted to Hindi movies and songs. Should we watch Indian channels and follow them when they are killing our people?
Mohammad Mahinur Rahman
Maple Leaf International School
Dhaka

India's anxiety!

For Heaven's sake, why should India be worried over the plot in Bangladesh army? Is this not tantamount to intervening in some country's internal affairs or is it a testimony to the fact that Bangladesh has ceased to be an independent nation?

I have an uncanny feeling that the said failed coup attempt, led by Major Zia, is but an extension of the heinous design which resulted in the death of 57 well-trained army officers and some of their family members during the BDR carnage that took place on February 25 and 26, 2009. The same vested quarter is perhaps trying to get rid of the patriotic forces of the Bangladesh army.

The official statement of the Indian government raises more questions about if the government is in charge.
Saleh Ayub

Modern driving institutions needed

We have learnt from a national daily that the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) has taken steps to set up sophisticated training institutions in seven divisional headquarters in an effort to reduce road accidents throughout the country. Lack of institutional training has been identified as one of the reasons for road mishaps. The Korean ambassador said his government was interested to invest in the BRTA.

Properly trained and skilled drivers will help reduce the number of fatal accidents. Sixty four driving schools can be set up in sixty four districts of the country. A large number of skilled drivers will also get the opportunity of going abroad with jobs and earn foreign currencies. A driving school can be set up with two or three mini buses, two or three trucks and two or three double-cabin pick-up vans initially.

The Korean government will set up seven driving institutions. In that case, our government should come forward to set up 57 driving schools in other district towns. Huge investment will not be required to establish and operate 64 driving schools having necessary infrastructural facilities and vehicles.
Md. Ashraf Hossain
Ramna, Dhaka



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

BSF's brutality on Bangladeshi civilians

I was almost throwing up watching the YouTube video showing the inhuman and barbaric torture on a young Bangladeshi civilian by the BSF on India-Bangladesh border last month. This reminded me of the still photos of the torture on the detainees at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq by some members of the American forces. What happened there was most inhuman that is beyond any condemnation. But that happened within the four walls of a prison.

What the BSF video showed harks back to Nazi-style torture under the open sky on the India-Bangladesh border in broad daylight. Those who took part in the beastly act looked like demons. Regular killing, repression and torture of the civilians by the Indian forces in Kashmir and elsewhere in India are well documented and, so are the incidents on the Bangladesh border. Shouldn't the Indian government think seriously of psychological counselling of their security forces? The video clearly showed that the BSF personnel were taking immense pleasure in torturing and videotaping the stripped Bangladeshi national. That's undoubtedly the sign of sick minds!

I am sure, any Indian worth the salt with little self-respect and human honour and dignity will feel ashamed as an Indian for so badly damaging the image of their country by such acts of their security forces, and, that too, in this instance, with the citizens of a friendly neighbour.

Cooper
USA

Let us be united

So far a few were reported as disappearing. Now we have allegations that even army personnel are disappearing. And what is more, our major business establishments are slipping out of our hand and going into the hands of our neighbour. The way India is treating us, as reflected from BSF's beating up of a Bangladeshi national by stripping him of his clothes and holding a BGB man in their custody, one day we may hear that our independence is disappearing. The government has to clear all the mess before it is too late. The government is there to bring order in every sector by open-minded consultation. Shady deals will rather aggravate the situation. Let us be united in our effort to fortify country's sovereignty.

Tinku
On e-mail

An insecure country we live in...

The way our government refuses to ensure the rights of its citizens is very unfortunate. The LGRD minister Syed Ashrafur Islam said, "Cattle lifting, drug smuggling and many other crimes have been taking place in the border areas. This has happened in the past, is happening now and will happen in the future." This statement clearly says that the torture by BSF on the Bangladeshis on the border is not much of an important issue to the government.

The 22-year-old Bangladeshi named Habibur Rahman, who was involved in cattle smuggling, was caught by the BSF on December 9. While he was returning back to Bangladesh, the BSF men demanded Rs 1,000, a mobile phone, and a torch from him as bribe. As Habibur didn't have any of these, the two jawans stripped him, tied his hands and legs and beat him up with a stick. Moreover, two days ago, one youth was shot dead and two others were injured by the BSF. Habibur said that chances of the cattle smugglers getting caught were high but many BSF men let them go in exchange for bribes.

There have been more incidents of murder and torture on the borders that we don't know about. I earnestly request the government to take immediate steps to ensure the human rights of our people in those border areas and also talk to the Indian government about this.

Choudhury Tasnim
On e-mail

Rethinking extended retirement age

The recent decision of the government to extend the retirement age of government employees from 57 to 59 years has become beneficial to those who applied for LPR one month earlier. But as per the retirement rule, an employee should apply to the authorities at least one month ago for taking LPR. In case, an employee applies for taking retirement and the authorities approve it, then how would the new rule be applied in his case? But in most of the cases, the retired employees have joined the old job again. I think the government should rethink the application of the new rule.

Uttam
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

The illusion of food security

The other day I was reading an article published in the Editorial section of your daily that focused on the issue of Bangladesh's food security. I was quite amused at the writer's conclusion that Bangladesh was quite secure without considering a lot of factors, such as the per capita income, disposable income, variety of food available at the same income, quality of food, etc. To actually come down to a rational conclusion, one would need to factor in everything that relates to food and the means of getting them, either by purchase or by growing them.

The writer, although pointing out some insights, compared Bangladesh with her nearby neighbours through some incongruent factors that cannot be used for comparison. A person living in India might buy rice at lower price than a person living in Bangladesh, but it does not mean that we are more secure than India. The total production and the value for money which an Indian person enjoys does not even compare with high price we pay for substandard food. With due respect, I beg to differ with the writer on that issue.

Asifur Rahman Khan
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ZAID AMIR ISLAM / DRINKNEWS



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City schools must return extra fees

Education minister stands firm against admission trade (January 26, 2012)

We thank the education minister for taking such step to save our education sector.

Mamun

A good initiative taken by the minister to deal with corruption in the ministry. Other ministries should follow this example. Being a doctor, I know that the health ministry is one of the most corrupt ministries in the country. So, necessary steps should be taken against the corrupt officials of the ministry.

Dr Karim

Sometimes the school and college principals are forced to cooperate with the local MPs in

charging extra fees. We need to identify those MPs.

Shimul

Commercialism in schools should be stopped forthwith; teachers should be barred from minting money out of private tuition. A comprehensive guideline for the teachers may improve their professionalism.

M. Shafiqul Alam

The education minister wants the schools to return the extra fees they have charged from the students which is a good approach. It will be interesting to see how he goes about it. Secondly, he has said that there

are only a few good schools in the country. We think Mr. Nahid should work for a policy to improve the situation. The implementation of the policy should also be completed within his tenure, as we will perhaps never see such a sincere minister in his place in the future.

Abdul Patwary

I congratulate the education minister on taking this great and bold decision. The minister has also said that we can get rid of this havoc only when quality education can be ensured in all institutions.

Tipu

I request the education minister to monitor closely whether his instructions are followed or violated. The ministry should rescue the guardians and students from this admission trade.

Afrina Yasin

The government can keep the MPs out of the school managing committees. It would help

both the guardians and the school administration.

Nasirullah Mridha, USA

We appeal to our ministers, MPs, economists, educationists, intellectuals and even the prime minister and the opposition leader to set an example first by admitting their own children and grandchildren in the government primary schools and other public educational institutions. This will encourage the ordinary people to do so. In this way we will be able to ensure quality education in our government educational institutions. Education is our fundamental right and everyone has the right to quality education. Our government should ensure that.

Kamal Mozumder

We appreciate the efforts of the minister in making a way of refunding the extra money taken by the schools and his attempt to stop coaching by the school teachers.

Nasarullah