

Railway ticket scalping in Chittagong



PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

The Daily Star (30 March issue) front page news report on train ticket crisis in Chittagong has drawn my attention. To save their skin, the high officials of the railway have transferred the blame for ticket scalping on e-ticketing system. The railway sells only 20 percent of the total tickets on-line (by mobile phone operators). How come the rest 80 percent of the total tickets are sold out within 20 to 30 minutes from the time the sale begins?!

The Suborno Express train plies between Dhaka and Chittagong. The train runs with at least twenty carriages. Each carriage contains 62 seats. That means the train runs with 1240 seats. Eighty percent of the total 1240 seats are 982 seats. If selling of each ticket over the counter takes thirty seconds on average, then selling of 982 tickets will take around eight hours.

It is not impossible that the black marketers return their unsold tickets with full refund, after the train leaves the station, through ticket selling software manipulation. Whether it is true or not can be found out by collecting last three months' data of refunded tickets.

Scalping railway tickets in Dhaka and Chittagong is a million taka a month business. So harsh words, suspension of one or two employees will not work. In any other country, high railway officials would be held responsible for their inability to stop such a large scale ticket scalping.

Faruque Hasan
Uttara, Dhaka

Sustainable use of natural resources

With a view to facilitating consensus on how to resolve some of the key environmental challenges facing the world such as, food security, ecosystem resilience and the depletion of natural capital, the International Sustainability Unit (ISU) was established by Britain's Prince of Wales, HRH Prince Charles. In addition to monitoring progress on the forest finance package, the ISU has been working in two new sectors - sustainable agriculture and marine ecosystem.

In fact, resilience of the ecosystem and sustainable agriculture are very important issues. The current intensive agricultural practices to produce more food crops for the ever increasing global population is not only causing a reduction in soil fertility and productivity but also creating a negative impact on the ecosystem. Sustainable use of environmental elements is essential for ensuring resilience of the ecosystem.

Professor M Zahidul Haque
Dean, Faculty of Agriculture
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University
Dhaka

A good gesture

It's a great pleasure for the people of Bangladesh that we have won a big boundary area from Myanmar in the sea without any bloody conflict. If we can utilise the resources there, it would certainly contribute a lot to our national economy. However, we also have a dispute with India about the maritime boundary in the Bay of Bengal. We also have a long history of bilateral talks with India for the settlement of this dispute. Still India is giving emphasis on bilateral talks to solve the problem. But our Foreign Minister Dr. Dipu Moni has asserted that the International Tribunal for Law of the Sea (ITLOS) would settle the dispute now and if we decide to have bilateral talks, that must be done according to the law of the Tribunal. I think through this she has proved her prudence. She deserves respect as a foreign minister.

Indrajit Kumar Das
Chittagong College

Digital or distressful Bangladesh?

There is a limit to people's endurance. We are overwhelmed with so many serious problems-- scarcity of electricity, water and gas has become acute; we have to suffer constant load shedding and the situation is getting worse day by day.

When other countries are going forward, we are going backwards. Load shedding was unheard of in the past, now it has become a part of our lives. The government's feet seemed to be rooted in the past, not caring about the present situation, about peoples' untold sufferings.

The Awami League-led government's 'Digital Bangladesh' has turned out to be 'Distressful Bangladesh'. If the government does not give attention to the pressing issues, the country will fall apart.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

GPO fails to show new savings certificate's rate

From 1st March, the government increased the savings certificate rate in a bid to increase the sales of government bonds. But the GPO displays the 2- year-ld rate which confuses the ordinary customers. I would like to request the postal authorities to correct the chart as soon as possible.

Sankar Prasad
Shantinagar, Dhaka

Competency of Rab

In a recently held seminar on Human Rights, the National Human Rights Commission Chairman very rightly said, "Certainly there is inadequacy somewhere in Rab's training and that needs to be looked into". He concluded this from the fact that when Rab personnel go to catch someone, it ends in deaths in almost all cases. The recent shooting incident of Narsingdi where six people were killed by Rab is an example that puts Rab's professionalism under a big question mark. In this particular case, they just received information from a man who was reportedly robbed of Tk. 48000 by the alleged snatchers fleeing in a microbus that was then stopped by the Rab force killing all of them. Surprisingly, the person who was robbed of his money now remains untraceable.

In almost all cases of extra-judicial killings, the Rab authority always comes forward telling the same story that Rab members got secret information that a group of miscreants was holding a preparatory meeting to carry out a robbery and they went there and killed the presumed miscreants who challenged the former by shooting first. But it is always the game won by Rab without any major casualty on their side but killing all the armed miscreants. Probably, the Rab is of the notion that killing is better than catching because the latter case brings many disturbing follow ups. But Rab is a law enforcing agency and must obey law in all their actions. So it is imperative that the Rab personnel receive proper training to enhance their knowledge and skill to perform their tasks professionally and humanely.

Engr. Md. Aminul Hoque

Sharp hike in house rent and woes of tenants

We, the urban people, are facing multilayered problems these days: Price hike of the essentials, hike in the price of medicines and last but not the least, the unprecedented hike of the house rents in the residential areas. The house owners increased the house rent by a record two thousand taka at one go in the recent past, and we the tenants are thus made to pay through the nose.

But what happened the other day was really strange. I was informed by my wife that our landlady issued a notice regarding a further addition of taka two thousand in addition to the existing rent, to be effective from June-July. I was dumbfounded. The reason behind the increase, as mentioned by the landlady, was the hike in the bill of electricity and other amenities by the government.

I urge the authorities concerned to please save us from this situation.

Rafiqul Islam Rime
Agrabad
Chittagong



PHOTO: STAR

Kudos to education minister

Mr. Nurul Islam Nahid is a distinguished minister in the cabinet. For his outstanding achievements in the education sector, he is respected at home and abroad. He has brought a lot of change in our education sector. Recently, he was honoured by the World Education Congress (WEC) for his contribution in this sector. The award will be handed over to him in June this year. We believe this will inspire our other ministers to work for positive changes in the country.

Rezaul Haque
Uposhohor, Sylhet

Impunity the big people enjoy

It takes little courage to break down the slums of the poor - but confronting the rich...? During the Caretaker Government, one thing happened that wins it my vote, any time...

All over Dhaka, Big People build apartment blocks and, strangely, despite the availability of brilliant architects and competent builders, the access slope up to their garages is not at the correct angle...

All over Dhaka, walkers on pavements are suddenly faced with a steep slope they cannot walk on, and cars are faced with a road that is even narrower because an access slope is extending up to 25% across the highway!

But during the Caretaker Government, some of us gleefully saw that such errant access slopes were unceremoniously reduced to rubble and the selfish owners had to rebuild them so they were not a hazard to others!

In Gulshan, the police who are so 'brave' towards the poor, seem incapable of challenging Big People who, for instance, throw left-over building materials down the banks of lakes or leave them in the street - enough to provide hardcore for many a highway...

Must the Caretaker Government be reinstated to give us a truly fearless authority?

Angela Robinson
Gulshan, Dhaka

"Of the ugly and the indecent"

Syed Badrul Ahsan's "Of the ugly and the indecent" in your 4th April issue was long overdue. An excellent presentation of the 'Ground Realities'.

However, Mr. Ahsan would have done more justice to his writing if he had not overlooked to point out too, of the incumbent PM's often cynical and indecent comments both inside and outside the parliament - often directed at the past prime minister of your country as well as at her children. Recently, in a children day function to observe Sheikh Mujib's birth anniversary, she raised the question of Khaleda's parents as well as her grandparents. In fact, the downslide of the parliamentary norms began at an abnormal speed from the time of present PM's earlier stint (1996 - 2000) when she had gone to the extent of comparing her predecessor with those of 'Ladies of the night', and, that too, inside the parliament! There is a saying: 'You reap what you sow'. Little wonder that you are watching the 'benefit'.

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Tuesday's The Daily Star news analysis headlined "What the future holds for us"

Suja
Making money by licences? Shame! We want better governance from the government and policymakers.

Citizen
How did they make Tk 400 crore? Is it not by corruption? Where are ACC and NBR?

Anonymous
Not only political considerations, but also huge amount of bribe was behind these approvals, I think.

Abdur Rashid
The fact is very simple. During the previous government's tenure, licences of banks, TV channels and newspapers were given to Jamaat and BNP people in a very systematic way. These are real political tools.

So there is nothing surprising here that at the end of the day they (AL) will also fulfil their dream.

Abul Kashem
The nation's future is very dark; nevertheless the patriotic political party is in power. They will go on proving that their interest is higher than the country's.

Truth Teller
These people already control the country's politics, now they will control the country's financial sector. Power and money: a good combination for them indeed!

Dr Qamrul Ahsan
I do not oppose giving licenses to more new banks. What really concerns me is that there is no deposit protection or exit plan for banks prone to failure in the failure. Our deposits with banks need state protection. Bangladesh Bank must make arrangements with all banks in the country to guarantee safe return of deposits.

Sellma
A very good write-up but I just wish the people understood all you have written here so that they would not blindly support the party who allowed these bank licences!

Hafeejul Alam
It is easy to make political comments. We should not forget that only 40% people are covered by our banking services. If there is already 47 banks, the sky will not fall down if 9 more banks are added. But how did 47 banks get licences earlier? Was it without political backing? It simply couldn't be.

Saleh Ahmed
Thanks for the news analysis. If you look into the AL's rule, all the 12 years, since independence, you will find that it is doing nothing but giving governmental benefits to its supporters.

Nasirullah Mridha, USA
Influential AL people got the licences of new banks. What are the criteria and requirements for establishing new banks? How much money these people deposited in the state exchequer as tax in the last 5 years?

Jonoter Moncho
Isn't it a perfect example of anarchism? One gets it for his political loyalty. One is a direct descendant of the dynastic system in this country. The rest are all close to AL... in so many innovative ways... directly or indirectly. We are simply stunned.

I must say that I protest. What are we supposed to do? Can't we fight this legally?

Amdem, USA
These banks will give rise to an economic force that will exploit the people. They will squeeze money out of the pockets of the poor people by dubious means. It will not auger a new prosperous era for Bangladesh.

Some people who have amassed a huge amount of money pressured the government to create new banks. They were not created