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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Railwaygate scandal

That day at a seminar speech Qader Siddiqi said that Hasina's days are not going well and nowadays she contacts him often. Although he did not clarify why Sheikh Hasina, the most powerful person of Bangladesh, contacts Qader Siddiqi, but it is not very difficult to understand the reasons considering the present political situation in the country. No doubt the turbulence created by this railwaygate scam will add a new dimension to her worry.

Media reports say that there is a bribery nexus involving the railway minister and others, from top to bottom in the ministry and that in the recruitments against 7000 posts in last one year, almost all the candidates had to pay bribe ranging from Tk 2.5 to Tk 6 lakh to that nexus. From this it can be easily estimated that this recruitment business generated more than Tk 400 crore and the recent recovery of Tk70 lakh from the possession of the railway minister's assistant personal secretary (APS) and two top railway officials is only a tiny fraction of the entire scam.

The minister's statement supporting his staffs proved beyond doubt that he was aware of this corruption business. Amid widespread criticism, the railway ministry reshaped one of the two committees it had formed earlier to probe the case but it is clear that the outcome will certify the minister innocence as it is just a departmental committee and not an independent or judicial one. But at last Suranjit's resignation has saved the party's face already tarnished beyond repair.

Engr. Md. Aminul Hoque
East Rampur, Dhaka

Easing traffic jam at Science Lab intersection

Commuters have to endure continuous traffic congestion at Science Lab intersection of Dhaka. Shahbagh bound vehicles coming from Jhigatola have to take a u-turn in front of City College since there is no straight road. This is the major reason of traffic congestion here. Passenger busses need more space to make a u-turn. So for providing the free space Mirpur bound vehicles are barred from accessing the left lane in front of City College. Again Shahbagh bound vehicles coming from Mirpur have to wait a long time in the signal. Thus severe traffic jam arises there.

But if only a 50-foot straight road in the south of Pubali Bank is constructed, suffering of thousands of commuters could be eased. A branch of Pubali Bank stands in the south of BCSIR. South of Pubali Bank stands a one-storied building and some tinsheds within the boundary. City Corporation can acquire the rarely utilised land on Pubali Bank's south. They can knock down the unfortified structures there and construct only 40 to 50-foot straight road to lead the vehicles to Shahbagh from the side of the City College. Then the vehicles will not need to take a U-turn, rather they will move on a straight way. If this plan is taken up, I firmly believe that severe traffic jam at this place will be eased. I urge the City Corporation to consider the suggestion.

Tashrif Billah
Dept. of EEE

Rid administration of corruption

The recent scandal involving seventy lakh being carried purportedly to the railway minister's house is an issue that should be seriously addressed. Are there any government jobs available without paying bribes to the relevant authorities? Here in Bogra, over the years and under successive administrations, I tried to help people obtain government jobs for peons, hospital workers, sweepers and so on. My success rate has been zero. In every case, the candidates came back to me to say that a large amount of money has to be paid before their application could be accepted. I approached higher authorities, but their response was: "Signed approval must be brought from higher authorities," preferably ministerial approval. How does one approach a cabinet minister to endorse an application for a peon or sweeper?

It appears that virtually every government job at this level is for sale. As a result, many deserving and qualified applicants are unable to meet the demand and thus fall by the wayside. Must this go on?

The recent railway incident is only the tip of the iceberg. Why stop there? Prime minister should thoroughly cleanse all the ministries and departments so that once more our humble and qualified citizens may be judged on their own merit for getting government jobs.

Syed Hamde Ali
The Nawab Palace, Bogra



Land phone users' woes

For long two and half months, my T&T phone (number 9669967) has been out of order. I lodged complaint to the T&T authorities several times. But they did not take any effective measures to restore the connection. I am paying the monthly bills regularly. Whenever I lodge any complaint, they do not want to hear anything, rather they behave very roughly. It is very unfortunate that in Bangladesh we are paying bills but do not get expected service. Rampant misuse of power has made the T&T officials inefficient.

Prof. Muhammad Mahboob Ali
Dhanmondi
Dhaka

It takes humility...

Please, will all (and not just some) of those who read the news in English on the Bengali media practice doing so beforehand, preferably with a tutor?

On a wavelength that shall be nameless, shortly after midnight last night, I once again listened to the news, read by someone who did not seem to have read it through even once previously, nor to understand the content (so got the phrasing of the sentences wrong which made it almost incomprehensible) and kept talking about 'Darkie'. It was some time before I realised that the reader meant 'Turkey'...

As a child, when asked to read something in my native language in public (usually the Bible) my ex-actor father spent around 40 minutes discussing the meaning of what I had to read and then took me to the venue where he sat on the back row and (in those days before microphones) I had to be both interesting to listen to and audible!

As Principal, I used to tell my Bangladeshi pupils that many of them were surrounded by those who spoke English very badly and very confidently - and how I wanted them to speak it well. Learning to do this - as everything - takes humility.....

Angela Robinson
Gulshan
Dhaka

Bridge or mirage?

An opinion on the matter of Padma Bridge project, published in the pages of a local English daily on 10th. April, was intriguing, to say the least! In my view, the saga of the 'Bridge' is more a mirage than substance. It is being planted in the public mind; more as a prop for re-election if anything else! That is possibly the main 'thrust', the rest 'bakhwas' or high decibel election chatter!

However, if and when the construction starts, the prime contractor, whoever it may be, will try its best to complete the job on time. For them 'time is money' in real sense; it is the key element of the profit; that they can make!

However, trust our authorities; they are experts in blocking and plodding; literally to 'make hay while the sun shines'! There will be many 'Paper Bridges' that have to be crossed, for work to progress! Here the 'genius' of our pen-pushers will come into play; and it will need real 'hard currency' from the bridge builders to cross these formidable 'paper bridges', through proper and adequate 'lubrication', at the right time and at the right place!

May be that is why we want the bridge now and the motivation is to get it going! Any 'lubrication' will come in handy, to 'lubricate' the way through the next election.

Doubling Thomas
Dhaka

Rehabilitate evicted slum people

The recent eviction of slum dwellers from Karail slum without thinking where all these poor people would go and its effect on city dwellers put a big question mark.

To rehabilitate them, the government or the NGOs can build one big building in each area with one room for each family. All the residents must have their National ID card in the guard room for security reason and they must pay rents as they did before in the slums. If the government takes this initiative, the poor slum dwellers will be benefited.

Syeda Maaleka Parvin
Banani, Dhaka



MAHABUB ALAM KHAN / DRINKNEWS

Respect rights of women

Men in our society still believe that they have the right to be 'angry' as they work harder and play the key role in maintaining a family. A study has revealed that violence against women has a lot to do with uncontrollable fits of temper that their male counterparts experience from time to time.

Men are still under the impression that women's duty is to be more patient, loving and caring. But how can the oppressed women, subjected to both mental and physical torture, be patient?

The truth is women are still viewed as slaves. They have to accept everything their partners impose on them without the slightest protest. So, laws alone will not lead to the emancipation of women. A change in social behaviour is needed to create a situation where women will not be discriminated against. Obviously, education will help us create a just social order. Men must learn not only to recognise women's contribution to family and society but also to respect the rights of women in practice.

Md. Ruhul Quddus
Mohona Abash
Baizid Nagar Abashik
Chittagong

"Russian professors for nuclear 101?"

The above mentioned article by Dr. Abdul Matin in DS (02-04-2012) is, to say the least, very unfortunate. As a matter of fact Dr. Matin has been consistently writing on the subject with pragmatic ideas. If anybody or for that matter any authority with a serious mind to implement the project under reference, has gone through those articles they must have thought those as very relevant and that down to earth points have been raised in these articles.

Nobody appears to have any time to go through and ponder over them. The result is "Several memoranda of understanding have been signed over the last three years" and no net physical progress is visible. May God bless us and show the authority the right path.

Prof. M. A. Quaiyum
Former Chairman
Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Tuesday's *The Daily Star* news report headlined "Suranjit shown the door"

Dr Reza Khan

It does not matter whether the railway minister is gone or not. The law enforcers and ACC must track down the source of the money and punish the guilty ones.

Sky

Hope this 'resignation culture' will continue in future.

Hosein A

Finally, the PM did the right thing.

Suahmed

Thanks to the PM for her just decision. It will give clear signal to others.

Anonymous

Suranjit tried but failed to control the situation. It was clear that the Awami League did not take any risk.

Zafar Benzadid

At last, Suranjit Sengupta created a good example of resigning from his post as a railway minister. We hope that the ACC or other investigation committees would see into the interests of the job-seekers who had paid money in the hope of getting job.

Truth Teller

The onus is now on the government to conduct a thorough and fair investigation on the current scandal as well as his son's wealth and his new luxury supermarket in Sunamganj.

Sengupta, Canada

How many big fishes are in troubled waters? How many will get clear signals from the prime minister? What about the ex-communications minister?

Firoz

It was inevitable for Suranjit to carry out the stern instruction of PM after sullyng the image of the ruling party, for the alleged scandal that happened at midnight. It was only a matter of time for him to swallow the disgrace for betrayal with the aspiration of the people who voted him to power. Now he has to live with this disgrace for the rest of his life.

Md. Abir Hossain

A rare example has been set by Suranjit Sengupta. It is the first time ever in the history of politics of Bangladesh that a minister has resigned from his office taking all the liabilities of bribe scandal on his shoulder. Sengupta has done what people wanted from him. But still the investigation is under question.

A reader

The veteran paid a heavy price mainly because of his careless public statements on this issue. But a possible conspiracy factor could not be ruled out entirely behind the whole drama given the corrupt nature of our politics. However, what has happened might be good for him as well as for the government.

Saeed Iqbal, Bogra

Warmest thanks to the prime minister for taking a timely decision of showing the railway minister the exit door. To uplift democratic spirit, this sort of practice should be continued. At the same time, we urge the government to hold a fair probe so that no perpetrator can escape unpunished.

Alauddin

It is better to resign without losing prestige. I must thank him for setting an example and showing the courage in a country like Bangladesh where corruption is a part of everyday life and where the politicians never take any responsibilities for any misdeeds like corruption. His resignation will serve as notice to other corrupt politicians