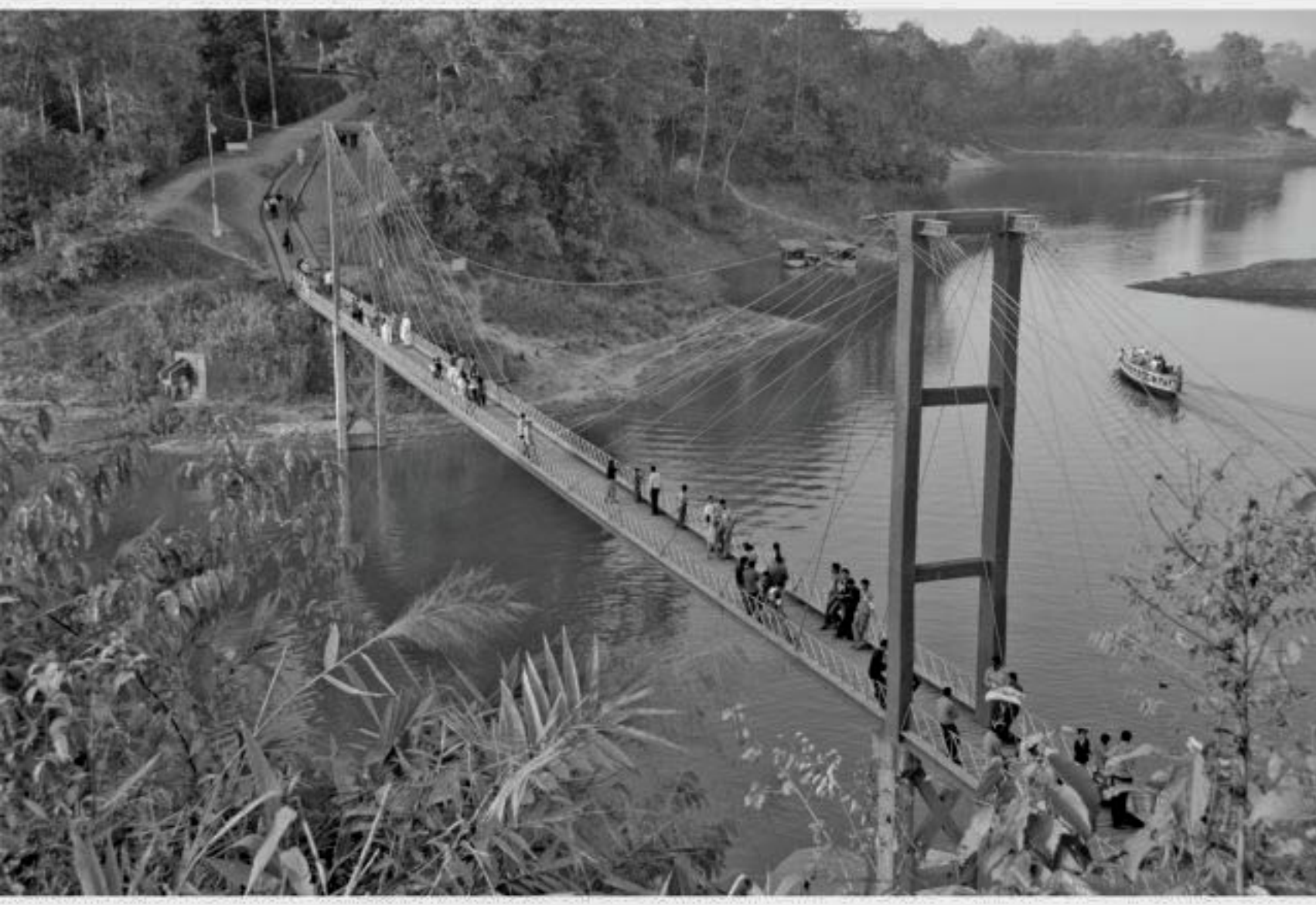


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 200 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

Use pollution-free cruise boats at Kaptai Lake



NOOR ALAM / DRIKNEWS

Congratulations to the Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) for making six crore taka profit from its commercial ventures during the last nine months. It is a rare achievement for a semi-government organisation in Bangladesh. I would like to take this opportunity to make a request to BPC. A good number of domestic and foreign tourists go to Rangamati for boating in the picturesque Kaptai Lake. The cruise boats in the lake, including the one belonging to BPC, use shallow tube well engine to run. This engine makes deafening noise and emits black smoke continuously, from burning diesel, and thus turns the boat ride in the lake into a nightmare. The noise and the smoke of the boat pollute the environment of the lake as well.

My request to BPC is to replace the shallow tube well engine of its tourist boat(s) with the chargeable battery engine which is used by the battery driven three-wheeler commonly known as Easy Bike. This engine does not make noise and emits no smoke. A tourist boat run by this engine will make the boating in the Kaptai Lake an unforgettable experience. Once BPC takes this step, the owners of the private tourist boats will follow it soon. And finally, the Kaptai Lake in Rangamati will become free from noise and smoke. The price of a chargeable battery engine is much less than the marine engine. So, the boat owners will also be able to get those at an affordable price.

Faruque Hasan
 Uttara, Dhaka

Import cattle from India

Bangladesh is surrounded by the seven sister states of India except in the South. The country needs a large number of cattle but do not import it from India. It is true that thousands of cattle are smuggled from India into Bangladesh regularly. Border Security Force (BSF) of India kills cattle traders on a regular fashion, which is not acceptable. Bangladesh and India are neighbours and friendly countries. Bangladesh import many things from India. If Bangladesh imports cattle from the seven sister states of India, cattle smuggling would stop. Indian cattle growers in the seven sister states will get good price and Bangladesh will be able to meet its local demand. Border killings would also stop and this will strengthen the relation between the two neighbours. In this circumstance, I would like to urge the governments of Bangladesh and India to sign a deal for importing cattle from India to Bangladesh as soon as possible.

Md. Tahmid Ashraf
 Central Bashabo, Dhaka

When business loses its purpose...

Business today as it appears is not business with conscience. It is devoid of any social responsibility. As a result, people's sufferings know no bounds. The price of essential commodities is skyrocketing. Are all the businessmen aware of the cut-throat profit many of their fellow businessmen make at the cost of the suffering millions? Business syndicate dictating price was not heard in the old days. There existed a healthy competition among businessmen to get hold of the customers as much as possible. We know that in undivided Bengal businessmen coming from different parts of India did their business with honesty earning the hearts of the clients. Those businessmen were satisfied with their minimum profit and so were the customers, getting products at a fair price. Both the parties -- the sellers and the buyers -- remained satisfied and happy. The present-day Bangladesh is a far cry from those olden days.

In an English Daily on 28th April the president of FBCCI A.K. Azad was reported to have expressed his deep concerns: "Most politicians feed on our money. We pay for our existence. We don't give it willingly." This is a serious matter to look into.

We hope the government will instruct its functionaries to take all necessary measures to keep the prices of the daily necessities under control as well as be responsive to the problems the business community is facing at the hands of the politicians. At the same time, we expect that the business community would be more sensitive towards the common consumers and consider their business also as a service to the people and not purely a means to make money.

Engr. Shaheedul Islam
 Gulshan-1, Dhaka



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Cowardly attack on Prof. Ali Akand

I am a Master's student of International Relations at Jahangirnagar University (JU). I have spent four years in this campus but never witnessed an incident like this before. On 25th April some seven teachers brutally attacked Professor Ali Akand, chairman of Botany department. I have witnessed this kind of incident among students but not among teachers.

If the teachers of the highest educational institutions confront each other in this uncivilised manner, what will we learn from them? The teachers could take legal steps against him if he did anything wrong. Instead, they violently attacked him.

Mithun Dip
 Dept. of International Relations
 Jahangirnagar University

DBBL scholarships a good gesture

Dutch Bangla Bank Limited has shown a benevolent gesture by awarding scholarships to about 857 poor but meritorious students studying in bachelor's programmes in different institutions.

As the Star business report (29/4/2012) says, under each scholarship an awardee will receive taka thirty six thousand a year. The amount of the scholarship is not that big but nonetheless it will help many of the recipients who would have to give up education, if this financial support was not extended to them.

The choice of recipients of the scholarships by the bank also deserves appreciation. 90% of the awardees have been selected from the rural areas and 50% of the total awardees are females. These criteria have helped the poor rural students with talents come forward and minimise the gender discrimination to a considerable level.

It is also learnt that DBBL is the highest donor in the education sector among the business organisations in terms of corporate social responsibilities. And it has a plan to donate taka one hundred and two crore to thirty thousand students by 2016. Hence, DBBL authorities' concern for the education of the poor is surely a step towards the development of the nation. Hats off to the bank management! We hope other big financial institutions and corporate businesses will come forward emulating DBBL.

Mohammad Rukanuddin
 Assistant professor of English
 Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology
 Dhaka

A genius we are proud of!

Eleven-year-old Fahim Alam has made us all proud with his talents, as published in an English daily on May 5th. It was lovely to see his smiling photograph holding his 'Chess' trophy.

Even the prime minister of France stated in a radio interview that he merits French residence permit.

Here is a shining star of Bangladesh who has proved his abilities, despite living more or less in hiding in an alien land and society!

We are proud of this boy and look forward with interest to his future achievements. May Allah bless him and his parents. He is the 'best of the best' quality human resource that we have exported (or smuggled) to Europe!

S.A. Mansoor
 Gulshan
 Dhaka

Patriotism in short supply

I have a feeling that we Bangladeshis miserably lack the qualities of patriotism and fellow feeling on which hinges the well-being of a person, society and the nation. It is now about three months I have been working as a Cashier-cum-Clerk in a convenience store Cullen Blvd, about 25 miles from our residence in Houston.

Cullen Blvd is predominantly a Black majority area with a few Hispanic people and some immigrants from different parts of the world. The store I work for is owned by a black gentleman.

The mailman designated for this area comes to the store every other day. One day he inquired about my identity. I replied that I was from Bangladesh. Instantly he said, "Assalamu Alaikum." I fell from the sky and reciprocated by saying, "Walaikum Salam." He further told me that he was from Egypt and has been living in the United States for more than two decades with his wife and three children.

One day after delivering the mail, he bought something from the store and I could guess that he did not need the stuff he just bought. I asked him, "Did you buy this because of me?" He replied in the affirmative.

Our Economics teacher back at school in 1970's, while discussing the economy of Bangladesh, told us about one of his childhood friends. After the partition of Pakistan and India from the British colonial rule, a Hindu friend of his living in the then-East Pakistan was looking to buy a box of matchsticks made in India, which would bolster the economy of the newly independent India.

It is almost impossible to come across a Bangladeshi who would prefer to buy a Bangladeshi product if a similar foreign product is available in the market. And with this mentality a country can never attain economic prosperity.

Saleh Mohammad Ayub
 Houston, Texas



PHOTO: STAR

Improving cricket infrastructure

Bangladesh is passing through a purple patch in cricket at the moment, as they went so close to winning the Asia Cup. However, it is unfortunate to note that Bangladesh has got no international cricket until September when they will participate in the T20 World Cup in Sri Lanka. The Pakistan tour has been postponed due to security reasons, South African players are not willing to play and Ireland tour is also uncertain. The BCB should realise that there is no alternative to playing more international matches. When the Premier League ends, there is no domestic cricket too. But if Bangladesh does not play well in T20, everyone will blame the players, not the BCB.

On another note, Bangladesh is hosting T20 World Cup in 2014 and ICC has mentioned that there will be 16 teams this time. For hosting this tournament, Bangladesh needs 7-8 stadiums. However, BCB uses only two stadiums: Mirpur and Chittagong. There are other stadiums in Fatullah, Bogra and Khulna but they remain unused due to unknown reasons. Could it be possible for BCB to hold all the matches of T20 World Cup in Mirpur and Chittagong stadium? I strongly doubt.

Tauhidul Islam
 Uttara, Dhaka



ONLINE VOICES

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

Major parties at odds
Willing to talk, unwilling to take move
(May 10, 2012)

So, the nation is again heading towards an unknown destination, more dangerously than before.

Abul Kashem

Awami League must understand that it will not be able to remain in power forever without credible elections. Or it should be ready for huge public anger against its totalitarian practices.

Shimul

We think this is the time to overcome the crisis the nation is facing. The way the General Secretaries of the two parties have expressed their views has made us hopeful.

Abul, UK

The civil society should come forward and invite both the parties for a political dialogue. I feel that this impasse may be broken by some civil society organisations. It is in the best interest of the country that someone should come forward.

Amdem, USA

Who will bell the cat if the major parties are willing to talk but unwilling to make a move? Our political parties have no trust in civil society, then who else can do it?

Sengupta, Canada

Our leaders need to show

statesmanship. They have no right to push the country into turmoil and uncertainty. History tells us that the result will not be good. I would encourage the media and the civil society to step in and invite both political parties to some kind of dialogue.

Hasan

Who is more responsible for restoring peace in our country -- the government or the opposition? We have experienced 1/11 due to the fact that the then government did not take positive decision on time. The fact is without the participation of BNP the election will not be credible. The government and the opposition should decide how to hold a credible election to restore peace in our society.

Mizan

I fail to accept the allegation of the opposition that the present state of affairs has been created by the government and therefore it is their responsibility to initiate the dialogue and resolve the issue. I would only request the

opposition politicians to look back on the past days when the last election results were declared. Since then the opposition has adopted the politics of non-cooperation including boycott of parliament and they even can not tell us what is their plan about the caretaker government.

Upfront

Political dialogue to end the impasse is a critical necessity, as the next general election is not far off. In fact, besides the opposition, the countrymen had long been demanding the need for such talks, and now the international community has stepped in. We feel that since the ball is in the court of the present Awami League (AL) government, it is desirable that the AL initiates the talks by inviting its counterpart either inside or outside parliament upon. But before such dialogue, the AL-led government has to publicly declare its support for the caretaker government system. In the absence of trust, and to avoid foul play, this commitment has to come.