

Modernising agriculture



FIROZ GAZI / DRINKNEWS

Kshiróde C. Roy's article entitled "High tech agriculture in Bangladesh" published recently in the Science & Life page of this daily is an informative article indeed. However, food crisis is a matter of concern in our country, where there is 1.36 percent population growth and one percent reduction in cultivable land every year. But efforts are being made for overcoming the food crisis.

As a result, this year's abundant Boro rice production has made us think of exporting rice. This has been made possible through adopting modern technology in agriculture.

Some of the important operations like irrigation, tillage, weeding and threshing rice have already been mechanized. This has contributed a lot to the achievement of self-sufficiency in rice production in the country. Farmers in our country are yet to use rice transplanter, reaper and combine harvester massively, which would be cost effective in comparison to high labour cost. It may be mentioned that even after having good paddy production this year, farmers incurred loss due to this reason.

Moreover, many hybrid seeds of rice, maize, vegetables and other crops can now be grown all the year round. However, using deep tube-well, chemical fertilizer and pesticides are also part of modernization in this sector. But now it is proven that excessive use of these is hazardous to people's health and environment. So we hope agriculture officials of our country would keep people's safety in mind.

Mobarak Ali
RK Mission Road
Gopibagh, Dhaka

Make private coaching policy practicable

The government has recently issued a policy to curb the widespread coaching business by preventing teachers from offering coaching to the students of their own institutions. According to the policy, teachers are allowed to provide private tuition to a maximum of 10 students of 'other' institutions. This provision will create problem for the students especially in the rural areas.

In the villages, distance between two schools or colleges ranges from at least 5 to 10 kilometres and most of the teachers are local people residing in close proximity to their respective institutions. Now, if the teachers are allowed to offer private tuition only to students of 'other' institutions, how will the students attend private tuition classes at teachers' residences? Especially female students will be in real problem.

Another remarkable feature of the policy is the provision of extra classes for the weak students at a government-fixed rate inside the compound of the institution. But, if extra classes are arranged only for the weak students, where will the 'strong' students go to become 'stronger'? Moreover, institutionalisation of 'collective' coaching against extra tuition charges may undermine regular classroom teaching.

Md. Mohsin Ali
Nutan Courtpara
Kushtia

Let beggar rehabilitation project work

In the proposed budget of FY 2012-13, the finance minister proposed to allocate Tk 10 crore to rehabilitate beggars with a view to making Dhaka city free from beggars. Finance minister said that they would take steps to rehabilitate 2000 beggars in Dhaka, Barisal, Jamalpur and Mymensingh area.

Begging is a curse to society; it can not be a livelihood. According to a survey, there are 1000 beggars in Dhaka city. They lead a very inhuman life. They even eat from dustbins, sleep on footpaths and commit many crimes. Such initiative to eradicate begging is undoubtedly praiseworthy. If every year we can rehabilitate a number of beggars, the country will be free from beggars in the future.

But many good initiatives end in smoke because of irregularities and corruption. It is a good initiative and should not end in smoke because of corruption. We hope the government would monitor the project's implementation properly.

Md. Rashed Ahmed
Jagannath University
Dhaka



PHOTO: STAR

WB loan needs reconsidering

The World Bank has cancelled the much awaited 1.2 billion loan for the construction of Padma Bridge on the charge of corruption. The new World Bank chief Jim Yong Kim also supported the decision on the ground that WB does not tolerate corruption. I am surprised to know that Bangladesh government did not help the investigation team properly, which means that some government high officials are also involved in the corruption. Anyway, this bridge will play an important role in developing communication between the coastal districts of Bangladesh and Dhaka. It will contribute positively towards bolstering our economy as well. However, it is really shameful for the government.

Bangladesh will have to incur a great loss if alternative source of funding is not managed. I think the World Bank should reconsider the decision. Apart from that, the allegation made by the WB has not been proved yet. In fine, I would assert that the WB should not cause to suffer millions of poor people due to the corruption of a few.

Md. Musfikur Rahman Jony
Baneswar, Rajshahi

Tax non-motorised vehicles

At present, there are too many non-motorised vehicles that ply the streets of Dhaka. They are usually driven by people who have neither license nor knowledge or consideration for traffic rules and regulations. I believe they should be forced to pay road taxes. Just imagine, if these rules were enforced upon them, how many of them would really ply our roads? Everybody keeps blaming the motorised vehicles for causing traffic jams and congestions, but in the end it is really these vehicles that are the major source of revenue collection by BRTC, and with this money roads are built and repaired. Since the non-motorised vehicles are also enjoying road facilities, I think they should also pay their fair share of taxes and other fees. I also feel these vehicles must go for fitness inspections and must be insured.

Aminur Rahim
New DOHS

Enact effective rent control law

The fixed income city dwellers comprising both middle and lower middle class households are in real trouble to tackle the rising house rent in the country. Landlords, in the recent years, have increased their rentals on the plea of increase in prices of the essential commodities, construction materials, holding tax and cost of the utility services.

House rent has increased nearly 300% percent during the last 18 years. On an average, nearly 70 per cent of monthly income of a household is spent on house rent. However, ideally it should not exceed 20 per cent of income of any household.

The fixed and low income households are the worst sufferers affected by the frequent increase in house rent. But there is no control of house rent in absence of effective government measures. There is absolutely no authority to monitor the increase of house rent. Also there is no effective law to protect the rights of the tenants.

Rent controller system was first introduced in this subcontinent during British rule. The Rent Control Act was enacted for the first time in 1943. It was amended in 1953 in the then East Pakistan. As a continuation to this, the latest amendment was made back in 1991,



PHOTO: STAR

which is known as Premises Rent Control Act 1991. As per the law, house rent should be assessed at 15 per cent of the total cost of land and construction for a premise, which is in fact ignored in most of the cases.

Here the existing laws related to house rent contain a lot of inconsistencies in terms of implementations. Both landlords and tenants are ignorant about the law in general.

We urge the government to take necessary action against the Greedy Landlords.

Peter Rebeiro
Indira Road, Dhaka

Broiler chicken: Is it safe to eat?

Is broiler chicken safe to eat? We all know about bird flu, but now the new concern is the "antibiotic medicines" that are essential to keep the chickens in the poultry farms alive. We have come to know that every poultry farm nowadays is using many kinds of antibiotics including Renamicin, Ciprofloxacin, Eritromicin, Colistin, CTT, etc. Poultry farm owners say that it is not possible to keep the broiler chickens alive without vaccination. When antibiotic is given to a chicken, eating of that chicken remains prohibited for three to seven days. Because antibiotic remains active in the chicken's body for some days. Its impact does not go even if we cook it in 100 degree centigrade. If we eat this recently vaccinated chicken, antibiotic enters our body and bone-marrow and weaken our tissue cells and immune system. As a result, when we will grow older we will become weaker and many disorders will start to develop in our body. But the chicken sellers are still selling the recently injected broiler chickens.

We hope the government will monitor the market to stop selling of these chickens to ensure our healthy life.

Jasmin Mahbuba
Dept. of Business Administration
Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Sylhet

Spray-on electrical battery

This fascinating AFP news, tucked on top of the back page in the June 30th issue of a local English daily, can well be the future alternative source of electricity, like solar panels. Unfortunately, I did not find this interesting news in any other English daily!

Hopefully it will be cheaper and easier option for Bangladesh, when available in the market. The prospect, potential and relevance of this news for us deserve a more prominent location in the pages of the daily, where it was published.

Further studies and tests of the painted-on battery surface, its power availability per unit area of surface painted and various other related properties of the battery and other important parameters are necessary, before it can be a marketable product. However, it seems to be a very promising breakthrough as yet another source of 'alternative elec power'!

Our print and audio visual media should keep themselves informed of this interesting discovery and update on the development of this remarkable "paint-on" electric battery. For Bangladesh, with its very limited geological fuel resources for power generation, this could well be a gift from heaven.

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Tuesday's The Daily Star news report headlined "Japan hopeful of new framework"

Anonymous

Actually, the Awami League government can't decide what to do.

Manzor H. Sarkar

The AL-led government takes the whole WB loan thing as personal matter. Who will suffer? It is the people.

Turja, Canada

Great idea. It is very much feasible. Go ahead.

Alam

We are hopeful about the new framework.

Fida Likhon

This is a national crisis and it should be wisely discussed.

PM gave a brave speech; the opposition leaders should support her.

Nasirullah Mridha, USA

If we want to implement this giant project with our own funds, as the premier reiterated, it would be disastrous for our economy. Rather we should persuade the donors to fund the project.

Sengupta, Canada

When one door is closed, another door will open. The government should take the decision with highest caution and it should negotiate with other partners so that the job will finally be done and our nation may see a silver lining in the dark clouds.

Md. Abir Hossain

The government should be steady in its decision that it won't go to the WB anymore for the promised loan. At the same time, the government has to understand that it alone can not raise sufficient fund to implement the Padma Bridge Project. It should not take loan from such donors who will demand some extra charge because it will create a huge pressure on the public's shoulder. I wish the government will work for the betterment of the people.

Anonymous

With the cancellation of Padma bridge loan by the World Bank, the political leaders are at a loss. When the prospect of earning money is gone, they have become confused and do not know what to do.

Translucent

While focus is on raising alternative funding, we should try to develop lender's confidence at the same time. This will require meeting some of the WB demands of corruption eradication. Otherwise, we are just wasting our time.

ShamimH

This bridge is essential for Bangladesh's prosperity. It will shorten the travel time from south-western part of the country to Dhaka and, more importantly, the manufactured goods from all parts of Bangladesh will get access to two major sea ports.

World Bank's decision appears to be politically motivated with the current Washington administration's displeasure at the removal of Dr Yunus from Grameen Bank. I believe the government would be wiser to reappoint him and watch all these current obstructions disappear.

Mshafiqula

Inefficiency and apathy towards combating corruption have badly affected our image. The present bureaucracy lacks the quality and determination to achieve the required developmental goal due to poor show of the political leaders. In this backdrop, it is hardly convincing that our hard-earned developmental fund will be utilised properly, rather siphoning off of the major por-