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Death of a great writer



He is not dead but very much alive in our heart. Late author, dramatist, playwright and film director Humayun Ahmed was an outstanding literary talent. He may have left this material world but his great literary works will live for all time to come among the common people. In his stories and dramas Humayun Ahmed brought the ordinary feelings of the common people to the centre stage. I pay rich tributes to late Humayun Ahmed and solemnly pray for the salvation of his departed soul.

I strongly feel that initiatives should be taken to translate Humayun Ahmed's literary works into different languages including English.

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

The news of the demise of Humayun Ahmed, a legendary writer, came to me like a bolt from the blue. I could neither cry nor speak for some time. After a while, tears began to roll down my cheeks when I fixed my eyes on TV screen for more information about the sad incident. Humayun Ahmed has enriched Bangla literature through his enchanting writings. He was the first to attract the young generation of the country to read Bangla books after the Liberation War. He has written a lot about life and death in his novels and dramas in a very humorous way. Besides, he has presented many difficult scientific facts in a very easy language in his novels. This is why Humayun Ahmed became the most popular writer of the country. The whole nation is deeply shocked at the death of this magician of dreams. I pray to Almighty Allah for the salvation of his departed soul and express my condolence to his bereaved family.

Md. Abdur Rahim
 Asst. Teacher
 Nawab Faizunnesa Govt. Girls' High School
 Comilla

Demographic bomb ticking away

The problem which should be given the top priority and tackled on an emergency basis is population explosion. The population in Bangladesh is not growing rather it is exploding.

The family planning programmes have virtually vanished into oblivion and we hardly notice any activities of the Family Planning Department (FPD) on the Radio / TV or in the village hats and bazars to motivate the people for family planning. Before it is too late the government must rejuvenate the FPD and set up family planning clinics at every union. The slogan should be "A boy or a girl, one is enough." All kinds of birth control aid should be distributed free and it should start without any delay.

Any couple who undergoes the permanent methods like vasectomy and ligation should be given cash incentives along with promotion in jobs, scholarship to their children up to graduation level etc.

The population census carried out just about a year ago is highly doubtful. Even a few ministers have expressed their doubt about the figure. The Agriculture Minister Motia Chowdhury said it best and said it all and I quote: "If the population is 16 crore only, then where have all the extra food grains gone that our farmers have produced?" It is very important to know the exact population of the country. All our plans will be ineffective if we do not know our exact population.

According to a professor of Dhaka University, the population of Dhaka city will be 5-6 crore after 50 years. The professor says after 50 years you may come out of your house but you won't even be able to move. Scary, isn't it? May God help this country and us all.

Baharul Hayat
 Rangpur



SHARIF SARWAR / DRINKNEWS

Save the Bengal tiger

Our Sundarbans reportedly has 412 tigers. This is good news, as it is the largest concentration of these magnificent animals anywhere on earth. But what are we doing for our tigers' survival? Theoretically, 100 tigers can be added every year (200 females breeding triennially with 2 cub litters). We must ensure:

- 1.Preservation and expansion of their habitat.
- 2.Preservation of all their natural prey and fresh water.
- 3.Protection from poachers, with severe punishment the present slap on the wrist is ludicrous.
- 4.Motivating those living on the fringes to protect the tigers in their own interest, reimbursing them for any loss.
- 5.Trade in tigers, tiger parts and prey be a capital offence. The criminal and abettors to be given deterrent punishment.

This task is too vital to be left to the tender mercies of the Forest people, whom I personally know, are the most corrupt of government depts. The example of 3 Shyamoli tiger cubs, since suppressed, is there. We need an independent task force of sincere people with wide powers to ensure the survival of the tiger. An Association of Concerned Environmentalists (ACEs). I am personally interested. I saw possibly the last wild tiger outside the Sundarbans in the Chema Jiri area of Bandarban in 1964.

On Sunday,15 July, NDTV of India showed first annual 12 hour Tigerthon on this subject. The terrific response from luminaries was heartening. To save the 1,706 tigers left in scattered forests in India, Rs 5.3 crores was donated immediately with pledges of much more. Did our authorities see and learn anything from that?

Sikander Ahmed
 Mombasa, Kenya



PHOTO: AFP

No need to beg for Padma Bridge

Why does our government have to beg for the construction of Padma Bridge? Padma Bridge when constructed will be a prestigious project and world heritage. It is a costly project. So our government should not dream anything unrealistic. Cost of building Padma Bridge is equivalent to nearly one fourth of the annual budget of Bangladesh. No need to beg from the citizens of a poor country by opening bank accounts where most of the people are not solvent and live from hand to mouth. Only a few wealthy families of Bangladesh can not fund a project like Padma Bridge.

Bangladesh cannot be compared with Japan, United States, Canada, Saudi Arabia, France, Germany, Italy, Australia or even India where most of the twelve hundred billionaires of the world live. So Bangladesh government should think something positive. Also Professor Mohammad Yunus, one of the few Nobel laureates of Asia, is in no way involved in influencing the World Bank to stop financing the construction of Padma Bridge, about which the entire world knows and our government also knows.

So I would request Prime Minister not to be so much optimistic about the construction of Padma Bridge with own funds or by begging, instead produce the culprits involved in the irregularities regarding the World Bank loan for Padma Bridge. And punish them whom the World Bank has already identified or prove that they are innocent and soon Padma Bridge will be a reality for the sixteen crore people of Bangladesh.

Kazi Mizanur Rahman
 Gulshan-2
 Dhaka

Make builders accountable



PHOTO: STAR

Why does it seem so difficult to apply the principle of 'accountability' to the building trade in this dear country? Are there deficiencies in the laws surrounding contracts? Again and again there is evidence of builders making serious and dangerous mistakes - and nothing happens and someone else has to pay for repairs - or they are left undone....

A headline of 20th July read 'Just repaired Chondimari dyke partially collapses - thousands of families under threat'. We learnt that one crore taka had been handed over to the construction firm who got the contract from the Lalmonirhat Water Development Board. The work was completed only 2 months ago.

However, some local villagers report that the firm used low quality cement CC blocks and not the ones as per the contract agreement. When local officials might be involved in corruption around such contracts, to whom can the local people turn for support? Is there anyone whose job it is to care that ten thousand families could lose their properties to the Teesta river and go and test the remaining blocks and, maybe, bring charges?

Months ago, I rejoiced to see the nice quality pavement bricks for parts of Gulshan but they were laid so badly that whole sections are subsiding and can hardly be walked on.

- Does the law of the land not make provision for
- (a) delaying full payment until proof of good workmanship can be tested?
 - (b) builders being 'named and shamed' and those officials who backed the contract?
 - (c) builders having to return and do the work again or paying for another firm to do so?

Is it not also a religious duty to insist on accountability? If people, young and old, private and corporate, are allowed to avoid the consequences of their bad behaviour, they never learn to respect the judgment of man. How, then, can they respect the judgment of God - or do they think that a sweet smile, a nice bribe and the threat of powerful 'friends' will ensure His indulgence also?

Angela Robinson
 Baridhara DOHS
 Dhaka

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Sunday's The Daily Star news report headlined "Quader's surprise visit leads to bulk transfer"

M.Z. Hossain

We hope the minister would continue his surprise visits to BRTA, BRTC, railway and bus terminals for better services.

Marjanul Fattah

Surprise visit works thousand times better than scheduled visit because scheduled visit is a kind of eyewash. Thank you, communications minister.

Mirza Ashifur Rahman

Please continue such sudden visits.

Minu

Thank you for your effort to attenuate the suffering of the people.

Hasan

Hope no political party or political leader will come forward to stop their transfers.

Md. Ashiqur Rahman

We want to see this type of minister in every ministry. Well done.

ABM Sarwar

Hon'ble Minister, your activities are highly appreciating. Country needs ministers like you.

Mohammed M. Zaman

Mr. Obaidul Quader is the most active minister in the current government. We need this kind of leader to eliminate corruption from our beloved country.

Mahbub Dalim

Sir, go ahead. We are with you.

AFM Hassanuzzama

Ministers should not stay confined in their offices rather they should do some outdoor work like Obaidul Quader does. This is an example to be followed.

Firko

Present Railway Minister Obaidul Quader seems to be a sincere man. Let us encourage him to root out the anomalies in the railway services. Bangladesh can be one of the most developed nations in Asia if only corruption can be checked and eliminated from every sector.

Kowser A Khan

Bangladesh is a small country with a big economy. I do not think it is very difficult to bring positive change in every sector if the authorities really wish to do so. Education, agriculture and food ministries are doing well due to substantial efforts from the three ministers. I hope Quader's positive approach will reduce the sufferings of the commuters.

A Citizen

We know that sincerity doesn't mean efficiency. The honourable minister is giving surprise visits and giving punishment to insincere staff which is very appreciable. But what happens after he leaves the bus or train terminal? Is there any monitoring cell or team to keep the minister updated about the present staff's performance? Are they working honestly? Why road accident, ticket scalping etc are not reducing? I request the incumbent authorities to establish a monitoring cell before the Eid vacation, so that the counter staff's performance can be reported timely and people can have smooth journey

State expenses on govt vehicles, meetings, tours, etc in budget

Every year we come to know the budget allocation and expenditure on various sectors no matter which government is in power. But unfortunately, we never come to know the public expenditure on some major and important matters like (1) Purchase of new cars for the ministers and government officials (2) Expenditure on P.O.L, repair and maintenance of government vehicles (3) Expenditure on foreign tours of ministers and government officials (4) Expenditure for payment of honorarium to government officers and (5) Expenditure on state functions, meetings, and conferences which are increasing alarmingly every year.

We would like to request our finance ministry to kindly include the above expenditures in the future national budget for the sake of our right to information, accountability and transparency.

O.H. Kabir