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# 'Benefits' of potholed roads!



PHOTO: TAIMM JAMSHED

On 9th August, most dailies published the communications minister's claim that "All highways are fit for traffic!" Firstly, nothing was mentioned about potholes, pools of rain water flooding potholes and other damaged road surfaces; and the dangerous crumbling and disintegration of the subsoil on the sides of the embankment over which the highways and roads are laid! This could lead to dangerous collapse of large chunks of the highways and roads. Yes traffic can move, but in urban areas, very often, rickshaws and three-wheelers get toppled and the passengers fall off and are injured, in the dirty water covering the roads. Some of these are shown in photographs published in almost all dailies as a daily feature.

But this does not bother the minister, he only believes in what he has seen personally! He possibly feels that these photographs are doctored, and may have been published instigated by the opposition parties, to undermine him! In any case, he may say that it was all done during the time when the opposition party was in government, and funds for road works were salted away in their private coffers. As far as he is concerned, if traffic crawls along, and can only use one side of the roadway, the other side being badly damaged and unfit for traffic, he may even say that the slow speed ensures safety of people; with no risk of any accident; ultimately preventing many fatalities! Road travellers must be prepared to crawl forward slowly towards their destination, with many unscheduled stops on the way. At least you will reach your destination safe and sound, which can not be ensured if all the roads are in good condition and traffic is moving at high speed all the way!

S.A. Mansoor  
Dhaka

## We are not stupid, are we?

That's a question I often ask myself, especially when I am spending my money in Dhaka city. I feel stupid to buy fake Dairy Milk chocolates that have no aluminum foil cover and taste deplorable which is found even in the most reputed stores and super-stores of the city. I feel stupid buying fruits laced with chemicals, because no one can do anything about it. I feel stupid bargaining with the CNG driver over the fare, because I know it's not his fault why he can't afford to go by the metre. I feel stupid waiting in the traffic jam because of lack of planning in developing the city. I feel stupid when I read about students being handed out GPA 5 galore, because it does not reflect the intellectual prowess of our students; they just vomit out what the educational system wants. I feel stupid to see the standard of our schools and universities, because we are so far behind everyone. I feel stupid that I don't have the power to do anything. Maybe I need a crash course on how to change Bangladesh. Maybe everyone needs it.

Asifur Rahman Khan  
Circuit House Road, Ramna, Dhaka

## Need for a foot over-bridge

It is now essential to construct a foot over-bridge at Nabisco point, Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka. Lots of people have to cross the road every day, especially during business hours. This point is being used to go to Gulshan avenue, Mohakhali inter-district bus terminal, land registration office, ICDDR,B and Ahsanullah University. Besides, there are many factories there. So a large number of pedestrians from Nakhla para, Tejkunipara and Shaheenbag cross this road with high risk of accident.

This road is common to Mohakhali Inter-district Bus Terminal and Gulshan avenue. As a result, it is always found busy due to huge number of vehicles and most of them are inter-city bus and trucks. There is no traffic police to control the movement of pedestrians or vehicles at this point. Sometimes people risk their lives to cross the road after a long wait. Especially, we parents have extra tension when our children are late and return from university through this busy road.

In view of this, we hope the authorities will consider the issue with due urgency to construct a foot over-bridge at Nabisco crossing point immediately.

Engr. Zahir U. Hyder

# Show respect to the holy month

The holy month of Ramadan teaches us to practise abstinence in all spheres of our life. This holy month urges us to keep ourselves aloof from greed and lust, to shun nastiness in thoughts and actions and to develop and nourish among ourselves the virtues of righteousness, honesty and benevolence. But what are we noticing in this month? Businessmen have intentionally hiked up prices of all essential commodities to squeeze out money from the helpless consumers. Unscrupulous manufacturers and traders are vigorously using harmful chemicals and toxic substances in ready foods, fruits, fishes, sweetmeats and drinks. Rampant extortions in marketplaces and on highways are going on. Crimes like stealing, snatching, killing etc. are showing an upward trend. During this holy month, the entire country looks like a happy 'hunting ground' for all criminals and dishonest people!

Though the holy month's sanctity is being tarnished so openly and glaringly, the government seems to be reluctant to take stringent measures to effectively curb the ongoing immoral, illegal and criminal activities. What can the common people do? We can only pray to the Almighty Allah to give guidance ('hedayat') (for right path) to those who are violating the sanctity of the holy month.

Md Mohsin Ali  
Nutan Courtpara  
Kushtia



PHOTO: JASHIM SALAM/DRINKNEWS

## Good luck, Barack Obama!

In a recent letter to his friends and supporters while reviewing the donations raised by his competitor for the coming presidential elections, President Barack Obama said: "This election will be a test of the model that got us here. We'll learn whether it's still true that a grassroots campaign can elect a president -- whether ordinary Americans are in control of our democracy in the face of massive spending."

True, Obama is a president of the people and his democracy is run by the people and of course it's meant for the welfare of the majority American people. I am sure, will re-elect President Barack Obama with the blessings of the common Americans. Majority will beat the money!

Good luck, Barack Obama!

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

## Apprehend robbers of Netrakona haor areas

A vast marshy land spreads across parts of Netrakona, Sunamganj, Hobiganj and Kishoreganj districts. This area has its unique feature. During rainy season, it looks like a sea with numerous villages that resemble islands. No cropping fields, no grazing area, even no road for walking. Transportation is made totally on water. During winter and spring the area becomes almost waterless. Even the rivers can be crossed on foot.

The people of this huge marshy area are peace-loving. Unfortunately, the whole area is very underdeveloped. There are fewer clashes and disputes among the inhabitants compared to the rest of the country. But nowadays all the villagers are afraid of robber, though it was rare in the past. Recently, it has been happening every now and then.

Robbers attack sleeping people at night and passengers of trawlers at midday. They even killed a man about a year back on 4/9/2011 in Adampur village under Khaliajuri upazilla. Robbers use modern weapons. We do not see any steps from the authorities concerned to rid the villagers of the menace.

Avik Choudhury  
Adampur, Khaliajuri  
Netrakona

## Endless excavation

Bashundhara City is the biggest shopping centre in South Asia. Eid shopping is getting momentum. Traffic jam is also getting worse from Square Hospital to Basundhara City due to the latest excavation work to set water pipes in front of the shopping centre at Panthapath.

This jam disrupts the movement of vehicles and causes immense suffering to the shoppers. But the authorities are indifferent. The digging can be done after Eid when there will be no shopping pressure at Basundhara City. I urge the authorities concerned to take the matter into consideration to reduce people's sufferings.

Md Hasibul Haque  
Indira Road, Raja Bazar  
Dhaka

# Fishy fish business

Syed Mansur Hashim's article "A fishy business" on 7 August 2012 in The Daily Star was an informative and in-depth investigative one. It has delved deep into the reasons that are responsible for the intricate value chain which makes the delicious hilsa fish dear to its consumers. The article, firstly, has updated the readers about the fact that the price of exported fish is much less than the fish sold inside the country. Secondly, it reveals that illegal trade of fish is several times higher than its legal export. And finally, it states that this fishy fish business is a regular incident in the country.

We thank the writer of the article for presenting us with the unknown information and urge the incumbent government to do something for making coveted hilsa fish available to its consumers in the country at a reasonable price.

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



PHOTO: STAR

## Science for progress

I am an avid reader of Science and Life page of The Daily Star on Tuesdays. But I wish I could read it every day because science is part of every moment of our life. Can we take a single step without the help of science? But we in this country are barely paying any attention to it. The advanced nations are developing everything and we are passively enjoying the fruits. Our schools, colleges and universities are teaching everything but science. Our businesses and industries do not understand that scientific research and development is a must for progress.

All our ideas, thoughts and actions have to be scientifically orientated. The politicians, bureaucrats, businessmen, industrialists, doctors, engineers, educationists, artists, musicians, sportsmen even drivers, rickshaw-pullers and day labourers have to depend on science. Even our great poet Rabindranath Tagore understood the importance of science and wrote books and poems based on science. But we are still falling behind in every area due to our inaction in the scientific field.

I think The Daily Star has taken a leadership role in many areas. I would urge you to take up a new challenge. I do not know how you will start the venture. But I suggest that you should organise a roundtable on "Science for Progress" at your centre involving personalities from all professions - scientists, researchers, university professors, businessmen, industrialists, social workers, economists, development workers, politicians from both government and opposition, bureaucrats (active and retired), civil society personalities and others you deem relevant.

I also strongly request you to start a daily page on "Science for Progress" and include articles relevant to scientific progress in Bangladesh in addition to materials on world-wide news on science.

Brig Gen Shajahan Hafiz  
Gulshan, Dhaka

## READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Tuesday's *The Daily Star* news report headlined "Ask Myanmar to settle it"

### Kazi Salim

Rohingya sympathisers should directly ask the UNHCR and the UN Secretary General to talk to the Myanmar government to settle the issue permanently. They should take initiatives to send back thousands of Rohingyas from Bangladesh to their own country. We have done much for the Rohingyas on humanitarian grounds.

### Indomitable power

PM mentioned overpopulation problem of our country. More than 28,000 Rohingyas are living in Bangladesh. British Secretary of State at first should have talked with Myanmar government before asking our prime minister about the issue.

### Firko

Myanmar government is responsible for the conflict. But it is trying to establish that since those people are Muslims, they should live in Bangladesh.

### Asad Zaman

It is in fact the responsibility of the Myanmar government to take care of their age-old minority population. The world community as well as the countries concerned should convince Myanmar government to act quickly in order to bring back its own minority people, who are living as refugees in Bangladesh.

### Afreen

I agree with the prime minister. The world community should point their fingers at Myanmar government and pressurise them to solve the Rohingya issue immediately.

### Nasim Hasan

We need to take strong initiatives to settle the issue. The Myanmar authority seems to be reluctant to address the matter.

### Jumana Sarwar

Bangladesh government's stand on Rohingya issue is inhuman. During the beginning of the fresh crisis, our foreign minister squarely blamed Jamaat without any substance whatsoever for instigating the crisis. We have to deal with it with full force of diplomacy.

### Iftekhar Hassan

Rohingya issue is very serious and all efforts must be made to settle this issue peacefully and in friendly bilateral term between Bangladesh and Myanmar. Bangladesh needs to develop a good relationship with Myanmar with a view to bringing lucrative economic dividends for Bangladesh.

### Iftikhar-ul-Awwal

It is fair and logical that Rohingyas be accorded Myanmar citizenship. The international community should pressurise the dictator regime to speedily rehabilitate the refugees who fled from Myanmar in the past. Having said so, it is humane that Bangladesh provide shelter to Rohingyas who come to our land to save their lives.

### Zerosopher

The UN and the developed countries should play the same role as they played for Libya or are playing for Syria. They should create a no fly zone within Myanmar and carry out targeted operation to curtail the capacity of Myanmar's terrorists, who are carrying out atrocities on Rohingyas.

### Mohammad Nurul Hoque

PM is right in her position; I appreciate her intelligence.

### Asif Fatha

PM is right. We cannot afford to give shelter