

Arresting price hike



Yesterday, while talking with our apartment manager in Dhaka over the phone, I asked him about the cost of living in Dhaka at the moment. I was rather shocked to learn that a Hilsha fish weighing about a kg or so sells at a price for Tk.1,000.00 - 1,500.00. If this is true, then is it possible for any Bangladeshi to have a Hilsha fish in months while the per capita income is less than Tk. 1,000.00? He further told a rickshaw ride from Kalabagan to Farmgate would cost a person Tk. 25.00 - Tk.30.00 which used to be Tk.12.00 - Tk.15.00 only a year ago, while I was in town. Well, how do the people afford to manage their lives, with the given per capita income and without having access to Aladdin's magic lamp?

Since hanging up the phone, I have been thinking how to arrest this unrealistic price hike, for which traders are responsible. This is depriving the poor farmers, fishermen and others engaged in ensuring the food supply for millions of people of the country. Not very long ago, the then president General Ershad introduced the concept of a meatless day in a week to minimise the pressure on the protein sources, thereby ensuring stability of price of meat products. One must admit, it has been a very good initiative. Taking a cue from his meatless day, we can perhaps adopt a policy of a fish-less day, beef-less day, chicken-less day, mutton-less day and egg-less day, which would ensure abundant supply of the produce and stability of the price. It is common knowledge that the price of a commodity is determined by its demand and supply ratio. If the supply of a commodity is inadequate, the price goes up; on the other hand, an abundant supply of the commodity ensures a fair price. Adopting of a policy of a fish-less day, beef-less day, mutton-less day, chicken-less day and egg-less day would ensure adequate supply of those commodities thereby ensuring the stability of price of the daily essentials.

Saleh Mohammad Ayub
Houston, Texas, USA

Warning to future passengers of Bangkok Airways

I would like to relate a personal experience I recently had with Bangkok Airlines, Asia's so-called Boutique Airline. I checked in at Bangkok to take a flight back to Dhaka on August 25. I was greeted with the usual polite smile and impeccable service which has become the hallmark of Thai hospitality and checked in two pieces of luggage. The flight was dot on time. The service on board was efficient and polite. All was going so well. I landed in Dhaka at 2am, got through the immigration in no time and went to the carousal to collect my luggage. After about half the luggage had arrived, the carousal stopped. The passengers were surprised, dismayed and annoyed till a ground staff of the airline informed that rest of the LUGGAGES HAVE BEEN OFF LOADED! About 80 pieces of luggage failed to make it to the flight even though these were accepted at the airline counter. The reason? WEIGHT RESTRICTION! The news was greeted by a stunned silence, shock and dismay especially from those coming for a short visit, holyday or work.

I am one of the lucky ones who got back my luggage after two days. I don't know about others. My luggage was picked up out of hundreds lying at the airport. The explanation? Backlog due to sudden rush of passengers, need to stock up on extra fuel etc. Was anyone told or warned of this situation? No one from the airline bothered to warn passengers at the time of check-in even though they knew this would happen. After having paid 25% more than its normal price - and I don't know why - I ended up feeling cheated, foolish and frustrated. Therefore, when checking in your luggage for a Bangkok Airways flight, be sure to ask if it will reach on the same flight as you.

Shaheen Anam

Health benefits of lal shak

Lal shak (red, leafy vegetable) is a very common, fast growing and cheap vegetable of Bangladesh. People eat lal shak due to its attractive colour and taste. Researchers reported that lal shak is one of the major sources of anthocyanins, which are directly involved in protecting use against cancer, diabetes, aging and oxidative damage. Anthocyanins are water-soluble chemicals which are mostly available in berries (blueberry, raspberry, strawberry, etc.). Recently researchers found that 100g lal shak contains 250-667 mg anthocyanins whereas 100g berries contain 25-648 mg anthocyanins. However, berries are expensive and also not available in our country. Therefore, lal shak can be our source of anthocyanins. So it might be suggested that we should eat lal shak regularly to get good health and longer life.

Azad Md Obyedul Kalam
PhD Fellow
Department of Food Science- Horticulture
Aarhus University, Denmark



Will AL and BNP answer?

It appears that some of our Awami League and the opposition BNP leaders are suffering from superiority complex. They both claim that they will come to power in the next general election. May we humbly make the following queries to both Awami League and BNP leaders?

- Would BNP accept the result of the general election if held under party government?
- Would Awami League accept the result of the general election if held under caretaker government?
- We build our roads with our own money and not with World Bank loan. Then why are our roads in deplorable condition? Where does our money go?
- Who would stop bribery, illegal toll collection, use of formalin in our food and printing of fake currency notes?
- How and when we would be able to build our Padma bridge?

O H Kabir
Hare Street
Wari, Dhaka

Govt should avail WB loan

Four letters written from abroad were published in The Daily Star on August 27, 2012. The writers are Sikandar Ahmed from Kenya, Sue Packham from Australia, Saleh Mohammed Ayub from USA and Fazlur Chowdhury from UK. They are deeply concerned and very upset by the current situation of the country. They expressed their views on many issues -- about the harassment of Prof. Yunus, about Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's interview with world famous journalist Stephen Sackur of BBC, her attending the opening and closing ceremonies of Olympics at the expense of the people of Bangladesh, etc. Fazlur Chowdhury from UK thanked Communications Minister Obaidul Quader for apologising to the people for their sufferings. We also thank him and expect that he will be able to rescue the sector which was on the brink of ruin by the negligence of the former Communications Minister Abul Hossain.

We learned from the August 27, 2012 issue of The Daily Star that a loan defaulter businessman and a junior minister who is a powerful leader of Awami League are misguiding Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina about Malaysia's capacity to handle the bridge construction. They have met the prime minister and the communications minister several times to persuade them into accepting the Malaysian proposal. But it will be a blunder; it will be disastrous for the country.

We fervently request the communications minister to con-

Playing joke on our heritage!

When artefacts of historical importance belonging to our country are shown to the general public, one can expect that the explanation of those items would be correct, in context, and error-free. Sadly, this small expectation of mine was struck down ruthlessly when I visited Sonargaon outside Dhaka city. Almost all the items on exhibition had their tagged fact written in English, but whoever wrote it, in my opinion, did not study English properly i.e. 'slaughtering' became 'slaughting' among many of the mistakes I saw. The artefacts are laid down in a narrow corridor through the complex, which does not permit anyone stopping to view and appreciate them fully. There are no security cameras inside the complex; despite several signs that forbade people from taking pictures, I saw everyone taking picture left and right. It's like our national heritage is a joke. The best part is, it's a joke only to us, not the foreigners. The joke is further extended if one visits Panam City, the first settlement in this area. The buildings, historically significant, look like the authorities are waiting for them to break down so that some new real estate company can claim the land. Deplorable, to say the least.

Asifur Rahman Khan
Circuit House Road
Ramna, Dhaka



vince Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina that the government should avail the World Bank loan, at any cost.

We are surprised by learning that the prime minister has not yet consented to the idea of her adviser Mashiur Rahman's resignation, which is one of the conditions of the World Bank. The prime minister should have the courage to face the reality and act accordingly.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong

Request to World Bank

This critical project has been totally marred by the nasty smell of bribery and corruption, the worst illness in epidemic form in our politics and administration. We are solely responsible for this shameful and disgusting situation, both at micro and macro levels. Our politicians and their 'Chamchas' have shamed the country and sullied its reputation, and this millstone will be around our neck forever, if we do not change and mould our national character.

As an ordinary citizen, I will appeal to the World Bank authorities that if they are positive about the socioeconomic benefits of this important project, then they may please sanction the loan, so that the project may start; the sooner it is, the better for the overall benefit of the citizens.

The WB may put a condition that Bangladesh would finance the equivalent of around sixty million US dollars (both in local and foreign currencies) to finance for five years an international oversight body to ensure that no direct or indirect form of corruption takes place in this critical project.

This could be a solution to finally benefit the ordinary people of the country. I will earnestly request the WB authorities to consider this option to contain corruption.

Engr. S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Myth about media

Contrary to popular myth the media is a commercial enterprise. Information published by them is only a "product." The veracity, or otherwise of the information is only incidental. The clients of the media are their advertisers and thus their loyalty is primarily towards them. It is only when you believe the myth that the media is there to serve the public you get into difficulties.

Miton Kumar Gupta
Phulbari, Dinajpur



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

Deal 'as soon as feasible'

Manmohan assures Hasina of Teesta waters;
Nam summit starts today
(August 30, 2012)

Shahinur Rahman
We are hopeful.

Nasirullah Mridha, USA

Before next polls Delhi should fulfil its pledges. All other issues should as well be addressed soon to accelerate the mutual trust between the two countries. That will be beneficial for both the countries.

Reaz Hassan

Indian government has a tendency to keep alive any bilateral problem. They demanded composite dia-

logue in the 1980s to which we responded positively. What do we have now after 25 years? Not even our share of Teesta waters!

Sami Khan

India has been promising a lot of things for the last 40 years. But unfortunately, it never keeps its promise.

Zia Ahmed

India does not keep its commitments after signing agreements, on the pretext that the Indian parliament is

unable to ratify it. My question is why do you sign agreements when your parliament fails to ratify it? India's dillydally-dallying about resolving vital issues with its neighbours has been going on since 1947.

Translucent

All deals will be signed just prior to the forthcoming general election!

Wally

Is it not strange that in the photograph the Indian national flag is behind Sheikh Hasina and the Bangladesh national flag is behind Manmohan Singh?

Truth Teller

The key phrase is 'as soon as feasible' which means whatever is convenient to India.

Saleh Md. Shahriar

The national interest of Bangladesh must be pro-

tected. We have no perpetual friend or enemy. Our national interest is only the permanent thing. So we must be alert while making any deal.

Khondkar Abdus Saleque

How soon will be the soonest? Bangladesh has shown enormous magnanimity in comforting India's concerns about alleged terrorist activities plotted from inside Bangladesh. Bangladesh allowed transshipment of their power plant machinery through Ashuganj-Akhaura axis. But India so far failed to reciprocate the noble gestures of Bangladesh.

We want equitable share of all common river waters. We want immediate stop to border killings by BSF. We want free flow of trade with Nepal and Bhutan through India. We want all land and maritime boundary disputes resolved as per international law. We want all issues