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Don't treat teachers as miscreants



PHOTO: STAR

We have learnt from news reports that police charged batons and hurled teargas shells on the teachers of non-government schools and colleges demonstrating to press their demand for Monthly Pay Order (MPO) listing of their schools. At least 25 teachers were injured during the incident. This happened when they gathered in front of Jatiya Press Club to besiege Bangladesh Secretariat as part of their agitation programme.

We have learnt that as per its electoral pledge, the Awami League government resumed the Monthly Pay Order (MPO) facility in 2010, six years after the annual scheme had been suspended by the then BNP-led alliance government. But due to fund crunch now the government is failing to keep pace with the actual need.

Undoubtedly, these teachers are passing their

days amid untold hardships. The nation can not think of progressing keeping these teachers in great plight. So the government must remove the disparity among teachers.

But what police did in the name of clearing streets is unacceptable. Teachers are not miscreants. Did any of the teachers attacked the police and injured them during the programme? They might have removed the barricade set by the police but it did not justify the police action on the exhausted teachers. What the intolerant policemen did was hooliganism, not professionalism. When will our police understand that beating poor teachers is not heroism at all?

Mobarak Ali
 RK Mission Road
 Gopibagh, Dhaka

On 5th October, the front page of The Daily Star carried the picture of a middle aged woman schoolteacher in tears. It was shocking to me. It reminds me the sufferings of my mother as she is also a schoolteacher of a non government high school. I know how much hardship a school-teacher has to undergo to run his/her family. There is no denying the fact that non government school and college teachers are the most neglected section of people though they are involved in a noble profession. However, on 4th October police charged batons on the poor and helpless teachers and lobbed teargas shells at them as if they were criminals and committed

terrible crimes.

In this incident 25 teachers were injured. But they came with a hope to end their long-standing sufferings. I find no word to condemn this attack on the innocent teachers whose demand to be enlisted for MPO is logical and justified. I can not stand in any way the humiliation of our respected teachers who have laid the foundation of our schooling. Honourable prime minister, please do something for the poor teachers. If you cannot meet their demands, just tell them that and let them go back with dignity and honour.

Md. Musfikur Rahman Jony
 Baneswar, Rajshahi

Why not file a case?

I am flabbergasted at the comment of P.K Dutta, MD of Sonali Bank that Sonali Bank is not preparing any case against Hall-Mark group. Why did the MD of Sonali Bank try to shift his liabilities to the Anti Corruption Commission? What an excuse to allow plundering of people's money! Why is he afraid of starting criminal proceedings against Hall-Mark? While strongly condemning the unforgivable act of Hall-Mark group, we urge the finance minister to pressurize Sonali Bank to file a case against Hall-Mark.

G.M.F Abdur Rob

Weekly page on agriculture

Bangladesh is an agro-based country. In the last four decades agriculture sector contributed a lot in the development of the country. We now read many success stories in the newspapers about the achievements in this sector. Recently a book entitled 'Agro Journalism' was published which could help the journalists present quality news and articles on agriculture. Undoubtedly, this book will help professional journalists improve the quality of their news. The advancement of agriculture is a continuous process. So we would like to have a glimpse of the latest innovations, progress and success in this sector as well as stories on what difficulties our farmers and scientists are facing working in this sector in this daily. The Daily Star is an esteemed newspaper. So we would request The Daily Star authorities to bring out a weekly page on agriculture. Hope the authorities would consider this proposal.

Md. Refatul Hossain
 Programme Director
 Dept. of Agricultural Extension (DAE)
 Khamarbari, Farmgate, Dhaka



FAZLEY ELAHI SHWOPON / DRIKNEWS

Amending Muslim family laws

An article was published in DS' Forum magazine's October issue highlighting the inherent gender inequity in the 1961's Muslim Family Laws Ordinance. Granted that at the time of their inception, those laws marked progress and, similarly the advent of Islam in the seventh century marked an advancement of women's rights in that era. In the 21st century, the constitution, decency, or commonsense requires nothing less than that -- individuals be treated equally before the law regardless of gender and religion.

Esam Sohail
 Kansas, USA

Power sector on vacation!

Your staff correspondent's interesting, though at the same time worrying, last page report published on 8th. October was an eye-opener. The key sentence in the report was: "Sources said that this training was best suited for junior engineers!"

Your report exposes the whole affair as more of a holiday trip overseas at public expenses by top ten officials from the ministry of power and a number of top power bosses!

The heading of the report further stated that "offices unofficially remained shut for two weeks"! This possibly indicates that these officials may be permanently put off, as then there will be no need to close the offices unofficially, at any time!

A novel way of managing the most crucial service of the administration, indeed! Top officials are "having a paid holiday, while darkness of load shedding envelops the country, day in and day out"!

Engr. S.A. Mansoor
 Dhaka

Child drives rickshaw to save family

That day I was shocked to see a boy named Rana (11) driving rickshaw on Jahangirnagar University campus. I asked him why he was engaged in this hard work at this age instead of going to school. He replied, "My father has been suffering from old age complications for the last six months. My mother is a housewife. I am the eldest among three brothers. So I left school and started working to feed my family."

At one point he said with tearful eyes, "I dreamt to be an engineer one day but now I am just trying to remain alive." Hearing his story I could not control my tears. Can't we do anything for these hapless kids on the campus?

Md. Mostafa Kamal
 Department of Finance & Banking
 BBA Programme
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PHOTO: AMIRUL RAJIV

Lack of coordination in public works

Most of the roads in Gulshan and Banani are in a very bad condition. These roads used to be quite good. Recently the roads were dug to install huge sewerage pipes in place of small and old ones. When the work was over, they did not cover the drains properly with the soil. This resulted in uneven and bumpy roads. Again the debris piled up on both sides of the roads (and sometimes on the sidewalks) had narrowed down the roads and footpaths. The idea of replacing the small and old pipes with the big ones to improve the drainage system is very well thought. But it is a shame that while improving one area, the workers destroy the other surrounding areas. The authorities also carpeted the roads without levelling those. So the roads are still uneven and bumpy. It is obvious that there was no coordination in the whole work.

Here I cannot but mention several other problems we the residents of Gulshan and Banani regularly face. We get smelly water from water taps.

The water pipes and the sewer drains are installed very close to each other. So any leakage in the pipes can easily contaminate the water. This is another example of lack of coordination among the departments concerned.

Again digging of the roads just once should be sufficient for also placing the telephone cables and the electric lines. But it is usually not done that way. We always find that every now and then digging is done for one purpose or the other, resulting in unnecessary expense and waste of time, not to mention the sufferings of people.

In most of the public works, there is usually no coordination or accountability. Lastly, I want to say that the ward commissioners and the high ranking municipal officers should take the responsibility of the overall work of their own areas.

S. Farida Ahmed
 Gulshan, Dhaka

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Tuesday's The Daily Star news report headlined "Sonali Bank mulls differently"

Neutral

The amount is too large for recovery by any legal means. The cartoon reflects the real picture of the borrowers.

Rubel

All the officials involved in the scam should be punished.

Suahmed

The indifferent attitude of the government towards corruption has encouraged such reckless forgeries in every sector. We have to find out the root causes of all evils in society and raise a social movement against all types of corruption.

Translucent

Scam on such a grand scale could not have taken place without the knowledge of the Sonali Bank board. The MD and rest of his fellow directors need to be brought to justice too.

Ronny

Dishonest officials of Sonali Bank should be brought to justice. There is no way to get these kind of large loans approved and disbursed without the higher officials' involvement.

Misbah Uddin

This is the common picture of our state-owned banks.

Niloufar sarker

It is the responsibility of any bank to check the veracity of the documents. I am shocked that the Sonali Bank authorities are now saying that the documents were fake. And they are avoiding their responsibilities.

Nasirullah Mridha, USA

Sonali Bank is now forcing the borrowers to sign stamps for admitting the liabilities. They are now saying it is doubtful that all loans can be retrieved. Sonali Bank high officials who sanctioned the loan should be severely punished.

Sengupta, Canada

Each and everyone engaged in the scam should be punished. State-owned as well as private banks must ensure safety of depositors' money in place. The central bank should ensure strong vigilance on banks so that everyone is under watch.

Ali

How did such a big loan evade the MD's notice? And now are they saying it is forgery? The onus is on the bank/lender to ensure that the collateral is genuine.

It is a gross failure on the part of the bank, especially when the amount is so high. You can call it Bank robbery in collusion with the high-ups. The culprits should be brought to book to regain people's trust in the banks.

Truth Teller

All Sonali Bank officials who signed the fake and forged papers without following the due process and those who did not do proper auditing must be arrested and tried for neglect of duty, conspiracy, cover-up and stealing people's money.

Hasan Mamun

I request the authorities concerned to act promptly to recover the money. They should nab all the people who were involved in the scam.

Reaz Hassan

The nation expects a credible investigation to unearth the truths behind Hall-Mark scandal.

Syed Neaz Ahmad

This should be the beginning of the end. The administration is simply incapable of running the country smoothly. Catching some front men is not

Devastating fires at Begunbari slum

Nowadays devastating fire incidents have been occurring at various slums in Dhaka. I think these are not merely accidents rather these are done by some influential land-grabbers to occupy the land on which the poor live. Recently a devastating fire burnt 600 houses into ashes and left nothing for the unfortunate dwellers at Begunbari in Tejgaon industrial area. Now they are living under the open sky without food, water, and medicine. Even no organisation or the government has come forward to see their condition or give them assistance. I urge the government to take proper measures to compensate the slum dwellers and punish the criminals responsible for the fire accident.

Badsha Solaiman
 Zahurul Haq Hall