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Tangail bridges -- when will those be ready?



PHOTOS: STAR

Your Tangail correspondent deserves congratulations for his article and thanks for two pictures of the incomplete bridges published by you on 21st November.

Why the two much needed bridges are not being completed, and left in limbo? Is there no local MP in the area, who might do something to restart this important work now lying abandoned? Why is the opposition party in the area not raising the issue in public? In the national interest, the PM may please look into it and see that the work is restarted, the sooner the better. At least one of the two bridges can be completed during AL's term in office. I am sure such a step will help her cause in the coming national election. People, who need and will use this bridge,

will definitely support the government, if this much needed work is undertaken and completed. Mere requesting of funds and asking the contractor to complete the work, without any funds available, is just a waste of time and energy of the low level officials. A political approach is needed, to accelerate fund allocation, duly supported by official requisition for funds. The local MP should seriously take up and follow this matter with due deliberation with the ministry and higher authorities. If, say, even seven crore taka is arranged, I believe, one of the two bridges can be completed within the AL's term in office. After all it is a matter of overall public interest for all!

Engr. S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Fight ignorance to increase anti-HIV/AIDS awareness

I think gloomily of over 400 organizations that claim to be working on HIV/AIDS while ignorance is widespread and damaging.....

How can you build the 3rd storey of a house before laying the foundations? Too many have never had proper teaching about basic reproductive health. About 8 years ago, the Bangladesh Centre for Communication Programs (BCCP) brought out a wonderful Adolescent Reproductive Health 'suite' of resources for 9 -19 year olds, including booklets, DVDs/Videos in 4 stages, beginning with 'Its your puberty' and ending with marriage preparation and HIV/AIDS - though this was made optional. A team came to the school where I was Principal to show it to the teachers, many of whom said, "I wish I had been told these things!" and wondered how anyone could take exception to the material.

I was given a huge list of schools that had agreed to use it and noted they were all Bengali-medium. (The resources were in both languages but I was told it is a difficult subject to teach in Bengali as so many of the words used are considered 'dirty' whereas, in English, they are more neutral.) I asked the superintendent if our school could use it.

The owner of the time had friends in politics and education and later reported, "They laughed and said the resources had only been ordered to please the donors but they would lie on the shelves until they got dusty and then be thrown away as the parents would never agree." Later, I wondered if schools could close for a day and have it as a voluntary programme for the children of parents who did agree....

No one is protected by ignorance. All Bangladeshis must be informed of the risks they take. Who can say, "I would be embarrassed to say anything!" when the risks of not informing - or permitting misinformation - are so huge? But so are the rewards to those who are given the chance to lose the passing 'innocence' that are ignorance, in a context in which they are helped to develop the moral sense that can lead to 'purity'.

Angela Robinson
Baridhara DOHS

Make formalin-testing kits easily available

Adulterated food causes lethal disease to the people who consume it. Some rogue businessmen adulterate food items with a view to making a huge profit overnight. However, it is good to learn that some initiatives have been taken lately to stop this malpractice. Some markets have been declared formalin-free. Import of formalin and other chemicals which are used in foods should be closely monitored. I felicitate the authorities for giving such efforts. I also request the government to give the malefactors involved in food adulteration harsher punishment. Formalin detectors should be made available at the shops near to



PHOTO: AFP

bazaars. The endeavour that has been started with a few markets should be extended to the whole country.

Golam Ali Rubel
Chittagong

Rohingyas are my brothers

A long time ago, I had written an article titled "Obama and Suu Kyi" that had been published in The Daily Star on 19th October, 2009 when Suu Kyi, the icon of democracy, was under house arrest. I have tremendous respect for this lady who has sacrificed most of the time of her life for the revival of democracy in her country. But the recent comment of Suu Kyi on Rohingyas and her sidestepping attitude towards them made me really upset as it made her very controversial.

It's a sign of sheer madness to deny the existence of one million Rohingyas. I strongly criticise the role played by UN during the communal unrest that claimed hundreds of lives and made thousands homeless. It is a sheer waste of time to analyse the birth-right or nationality of the Rohingyas. Rather it's more important to rehabilitate the Rohingyas and take all

necessary steps so that they do not have to face any kind of violence in future. Attack on any minority group of a country is an attack on humanity.

Obama had done a brilliant job by coming to Myanmar and speaking for Rohingyas which increased my respect towards Obama. It would be admirable if other world leaders could come to Myanmar amidst the communal violence and take fruitful steps to save the Rohingyas. It's my request to the international community to make frequent visits to Myanmar and ensure permanent security of the Rohingyas. I am certain that the collaborative effort of Obama, Suu Kyi and the world leaders would definitely bring positive change in the situation.

As an ordinary man, I cannot do anything for the Rohingyas but feel proud to say that Rohingyas are my brothers and my brothers have absolute right to stay in their country with utmost dignity.

Pradip Das

President Obama, US economy and peace

Only 4% American voters are concerned about their foreign policy. But more than 60% voters are concerned about their economy. It seems to me that military cost is one of the major cause of the US' weak economy i.e. budget deficit, unemployment and poverty. So their foreign policy is a big factor for their economy. This reality should be understood by the ordinary American people. We came to know that cyclone Sandy might have cost America USD 20 billion. American economy needs more careful handling by the Obama administration. Racial division is growing gradually that may take serious turn in future. So president Obama should take the responsibility to unite the deeply divided American society. President Obama's win for four more years is a hope for the peace-loving people. I think Obama will be able to bring peace in the Middle East and other parts of the world.

My request to President Obama, please create an environment in the Middle East and other parts of the globe so that all the warring parties can engage in a meaningful dialogue towards peace.

Md. Abul Kashem



PHOTO: WRITER

Whose footpath is this?

Please have a good look at the picture. It was taken a few days ago at Mohakhali bus stop area. The place is opposite to ICDDR,B's office. Beside the footpath, there stands the Mohakhali Masjid. I think the picture says it all! The pavement or footpath whatever you call it, has been used by the makeshift shops forcing the pedestrians to walk on the roads, which is contributing to traffic jam. On behalf of the Dhaka city dwellers, may I humbly ask how come a footpath of an important point of the city has been encroached by the illegal shops before the eyes of the government authorities?

Khandaker Zia Hasan
Special Correspondent
Weekly Jogajog
Canada

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Tuesday's *The Daily Star* news report headlined "Abuls claim innocence"

Habibur Rahman

We do not want any drama. We only want Padma bridge.

Reaz Hassan

Every accused expresses his innocence. It is the task of the prosecution to arrive at the truth. The World Bank is trying to help the one-eyed ACC but finding it difficult to convince it and make it see reason. We the people, on the other hand, are the sacrificial lamb.

Barkat

There is no single incident in the history of Bangladesh where a minister or a prime minister has taken the responsibility for their mistake or accepted their guilt.

Deep Purple Blue

Leave it to the WB's legal team and they will find out the truth.

Roni Rahman

Does it mean that the government is letting Abul off the hook? Does the government think that if it let the lower officials be caught, WB will stop demanding punishment for the high-ups?

Manzoor Ashraf

Abul is innocent, Suranjit is innocent and everybody who is an Awami Leaguer is also innocent. Only BNP, Jamaat and those who speak against Awami League's wrongdoings are guilty.

Translucent

There is no fire without smoke!

Misbah Uddin Sumon

We believe in work not in quarrel!

Dr. Nazmul Haq

There is no problem if one declares himself to be innocent. But in Bangladesh corrupt people never serve time in jail whether they are civilian or military bureaucrats, engineers, doctors, lawyers, politicians or businessmen. Few of the above class of people were convicted in the lower court, while they were absolved of their crimes in the higher courts.

Mohammad Nurul Hoque

Abul and innocence! Interesting.

Asad Zaman

Every person under investigation has the right to defend himself. So Abul Hossain and Abul Hasan have also the right to defend themselves. They are presumed to be innocent until proven guilty by the court.

Truth Teller

May be Abul should be recommended for sainthood to the Pope.

Niloufar Sarker

What is wrong if the former communications minister claims himself innocent? A suspect is presumed to be innocent until proven guilty in the court of law. There is an investigation going on by the ACC under the supervision of WB. Character assassination is also a heinous crime and we should refrain from vitriolic comments.

Concerned Expat

I do not want to judge Abul; may be he is guilty or may be not. I think one should think a bit harder on the issue, that is - what if he is telling the truth that he did not take any bribe or commission under the table? Does the WB have any substantive proof with actual bank transaction? Every day we hear that Abul is corrupt or that the finance advisor is corrupt. May be everyone is corrupt, but before we gleefully hang them, we should do utmost to ensure that we actually got the right person rather than