

Youths to Step Forward towards Making 'Sonar Bangladesh'

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Bangladesh, with eighth largest population in the world, became one of the densely populated countries in the world. Skyscrapers are coming up rapidly in the urban areas with little or no heed to RAJUK rules and regulation; canals, rivers, lakes, etc are becoming moribund; most of the river waters in city area have become polluted causing stringent smell that ultimately kills fresh water fishes. Due to the rapid urbanization, the arable lands are decreasing fast forcing Bangladesh to depend on imported goods from abroad. Bangladesh has had bitter experience of dependence of imported food in different situation. The artificial food will create more diseases like cancer where more than 15 lakh Bangladeshi people are suffering from cancer.

Myanmar has pushed over 1.1 million people to our country further aggravating the decaying eco-system in Coxes Bazar area leaving these people to uncertain future. The biggest fear is that there is

every possibility of turning these uneducated people to be exploited by various interested groups exposed to human trafficking, resort to illegal migration, drug smuggling through Bay of Bengal. International community is not going to provide aid for indefinite period. If these people burst, imagine what could happen the security situation in our country.

In the 21st century, the Bay of Bengal has become the fulcrum of superpower rivalry an invisible competition between Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Indo-Pacific Strategy or IPS. BRI is a China-led economic forum where Bangladesh has joined along with most other South Asian countries except India. On the other hand, IPS is USA led strategy with the primary objective of advocating Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) for all countries to use the seas for their navigation operations irrespective of big or small countries. How Bangladesh can steer between two giant forums and gain

most out of it should be the concern for our country. If we fail to choose the right decision, we would be deprived of economic benefit and thereby maritime connectivity. These are the next strategic levels for the Bangladeshi youths to ponder on making a better Bangladesh.

Therefore, today's Bangladesh, in fact the whole world, is not the same as what we experienced a half-century ago. Our generation (back in 50/60s) will be vanished by another one/two decades but what kind of world we are leaving behind for our next generation that needs careful attention. The youths who are reading this article will have to face daunting future challenges; they will have to face tougher life than we faced; shortage of naturally grown food; more uncertainty than before unknown diseases like Coronavirus, SARS, etc.

in the maritime domain. Being a maritime country, Bangladesh ought to be concerned for its survival as her 82% commerce is seaborne and the depleted land resources will force us to find alternatives none other than sea resources that are gifted by the Bay of Bengal.

The effect of climate change caused by human influence on nature, as claimed by Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), is now a much-discussed topic amongst researchers, predicting the future of the world would be worst affected due to climate change. Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries in the climate change effect. Our Honorable Prime Minister called upon the global community in the Conference Of Parties (COP25) in Madrid on 2nd Dec'19, "As



The youth needs to come forward to face future challenges; how to survive in a difficult world; efforts for the sustainable economy; think for the better living standard how to make better Bangladesh or 'Sonar Bangladesh'. Mere doing your routine job would not protect you from this uncertainty you would be facing in the future days to come. Today, Bangladesh is the worst sufferer due to the effect of global warming. The future prediction gives a more dismal picture.

Recently lots of talks are going on about the uncertainties of the world, especially

our people will be displaced for no fault of ours.....we expect the international community to shoulder the responsibility of accommodating them and providing them with livelihood". Cognitive dissonance, I refer to President Donald Trump, on the effect of climate change is also there but that needs careful study to find out the facts.

According to Global Strategic Trends (GST), Min of Def, UK, the choke points are likely to be disrupted, the world population will be more than 9.5 billion by 2050, demand for food will increase, on the other hand, some crops may fail;

destruction of homes and livelihoods due to natural disaster could lead to migration and conflict; fishery yield in the tropical area could decline by the substantial amount due to the pollution that creates a dead zone in the ocean, almost half of the population is unlikely to have reliable access to clean water by 2050 and 90% of them will be living in south and southeast Asia. Should not it be the concern that what kind of uncertainties we would likely face in the future days?

All these uncertainties, mentioned above, left us with one option of "strategic adaptability" which would possibly play the central role of all maritime activities. But the strategic adaptability is so vast that, notwithstanding, it needs careful study and research for taking the future course of action.

All the activities mentioned above related to maritime action need not explain the much requirement of maritime awareness. That is what is BIMRAD is trying its best to contribute to the maritime domain.

The maritime domain is our concern and at the same time, it is a challenge how to get the benefit of the sea in our advantages which can only be

materialized through quality research and most importantly our cooperation.

Let us take alone on ocean pollution. It is predicted that there will be more plastics in the sea than fish by 2050. According to research, the dead zone is creating in the Bay of Bengal where fish do not survive; it should be a huge concern for all littoral countries of the Bay of Bengal. Have we given due consideration as a conscious citizen of Bangladesh? By the time we read this article, millions of tons of waste will be disposed of to the sea. Maritime awareness has to be grown within us first, growing awareness to make the sea least corroded as far as possible. We urge all conscious citizens that let us contemplate how to stop pollution out at the sea. Let us make a start within ourselves first, so that we can convey the message to others by showing examples.

Therefore, we urge upon all youths to come up with your innovative ideas to make the future living standard better; let us grow our consciousness; let us give at least one hour in the field of research; at least once in a week, say in the weekend, do some social activities for the destitute people. This way we may step forward towards making the 'Sonar Bangladesh'.