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Teachers also to Blame

President Shahabuddin is, for many, the conscience-keeper of the nation. True to this image he doesn't often mince words where lesser mortals would in his place. His express position on campus violence was misunderstood by many, supported by some and rejected by others. No matter the merit of what he actually said, it was clear to all he had waded into areas presidents are not wont to hit. He has again come up with a similar sharp observation which may displease many. But so long unsaid - the truth of the 'unfair means in exam halls' has gone full five fathom beneath garbage made of demeaning compromises and unabashed corruption. President Shahabuddin this time, yesterday, has taken on something known so very well to all and yet never uttered by any one in a responsible position. He said, point blank, teachers also are to blame for the copying crime of the students. This time some teachers may be unhappy over this but the nation as a whole will love and admire him the more.

There are criminals in every profession and calling. So are there those teachers who supply copies to examinees, tamper with answer scripts, leak questions etc etc. These criminals can be caught easily and penalised and their doings prevented from being injurious the way they are now. Granted there are exam centres which specialise in helping the examinees as an established practice. But it is far easier to discipline these than doing anything about the subtler ways in which teachers make their pupils crime-dependent.

The schools have now become redundant. Copying the wayward doctor who advises hospital patients to see him in his chamber, the teacher is at home to as many student as want to depend on him for a pass. What does the pupil learn privately? He or she is given notes to memorise or to copy. The pupil learns nothing either in the school or in the teacher's house. He or she has now no way but to copy.

The teachers in fact are involved in a more sinister thing than mere copying in the exam halls. Those that pass and get a certificate are hardly any better material than that fail - aptitude and receptivitywise and also in accomplishment terms.

The only thing that can be said in defence of the teachers is that they are the victims of a complicated degenerative national situation rather than culprits bringing the horrible thing about. The teachers, in their wisdom, should have resisted the slide and come up with some way out of this terrible scenario.

The Food We Eat

The larder is laid open spilling poisonous foods all over. This time not by investigative newspaper reports but by an authentic confirmation from the Institute of Public Health (IPH).

Its central laboratory has revealed that more than 45 per cent of the food stuffs tested by it last month proved they were adulterated, a percentage that far exceeds the previously recorded one. Still the assessment is flawed in terms of magnitude measurement. For, the Public Health Laboratory is circumscribed by law to test only 107 food items which appear on the combined list of 1959 and 1967 vintages. Could they have tested those many items on a month's operational format? Doubtful. And what of the many more food items that have inundated the market since then, to say nothing of the deluge of fast-track foods and canned stuffs with variegated artificial colourings and synthetic additives inside of them all of which keeping out of the law's purview even for the rudimentary testing purposes.

That the laws have been allowed to remain obsolete for so long with a fig-leaf of laboratory equipment refurbishment is an indictment enough on our colossal callousness towards the sustenance of life which foods are. We are evidently anti-life when leafy vegetables are sprayed with a green veneer, rice grains are whitened artificially, sugar contains splintered glass granules, dryfish is DDTised, puffed rice has had a urea blow-up, edible oil is greased with mobil and palm oil is chemically catalysed into mustard oil or passes for soyabean oil.

Adulteration as a criminal offence, customarily indulged by the government and tolerated by the citizenry, is only the larger half of the challenge. The remainder is made up of the fungi-laden rotten food stuffs and canned, bottled, sachetted items or chocolate bars with their expiry dates overshot.

The Augean Stable cannot be cleansed by an updated swipe of the law alone; for all one knows, tough provisions against food adulteration under SPA notwithstanding, the lethal practice could not be contained. We need a national political will to firmly establish the value of human health and life. Then horizontally there better be community resistance steeled in a resolve to refuse harmful foods and to go to the court for a remedy, where necessary, with perhaps help extended by legal aid groups.

Imitable Fathers

Of late, a very remarkable spate of morally edifying incidents has been reported across the country: fathers handing over their guilty scions to the guardians of law on personal initiatives. It all started from March 11 when Abul Kashem, having been informed of his son Chan Miah's involvement in an incident of acid throwing on a young girl as a vengeful retaliation over a romantic misadventure, took the trouble of travelling to nearby village in order to nab him. For what? No, not to goad him to go to a safer place to escape the long arm of the law but to help the proverbial arm of law reach him. Since then this quiet feat of heroism has been put on a spree of replication. We have had one after another images of courage in the hitherto insignificant names of driver Sattar and schoolmaster Hashem.

These instances of fathers volunteering the capture of their sinning children are not unique ones. But in the face of gradual tendency of the society to slide into anarchy due to unscrupulous preference of materialistic gain to value and moral restraint, they come as immensely edifying examples. We know that the heroic sacrifice of filial love and the consequent shame these patriarchs have put up with are characteristics needed to be shown most by the parents and relations at the upper echelons of the society. If parents irrespective of their social position take a leaf out of the book of these imitable fathers they will do country's law and order situation more favour than legions of police can ever think of doing.

Helsinki Summit: Easing Security Concern

The five joint statements relate to European security, the parameters of a future reduction of nuclear arms,

reduction in the field of anti ballistic missiles, reduction of chemical weapons and the fifth on

N their eleventh meeting in four years, President Bill Clinton of the USA and Boris Yeltsin of Russia appeared to come closer than ever before. This is how the Helsinki Summit can best be

summarised. Five joint statements were signed at the end of two days of talks between President Clinton and President Yeltsin. There was a reversal of fortune healthwise and particularly as seen by the media as far as Clinton and Yeltsin were concerned. The usually robust and athletic Clinton had to be lowered from the plane via a food van attached to the plane. This is due to the injury and later surgery he underwent recently while playing golf. Yeltsin on the contrary appeared to radiate health in spite of his bypass surgery followed by pneumonia.

The five joint statements relate to European security, the parameters of a future reduction of nuclear arms, reduction in the field of anti ballistic missiles, reduction of chemical weapons and the fifth on 'American economic initiatives' to help Russia.

HE decision of Congress

'American economic initiatives' to help Russia. A close study of the agree-

ments reveal the forward march in the relations between the US and Russia engaged since several years and intensified since the end of the Cold War. It is, therefore not surprising that arms reduction figure so prominently in the just concluded agreements. American economic initiatives an euphemism for shoring up the faltering economy of Russia, figures last although it must have. as usual, played a prominent role in helping the talks along.

Continuous efforts are being made by the West with the US playing the leading role, in integrating Russia fully into the West. For some time, Russia has been attending as an 'observer' the regular meetings of G7, the gathering of the world's most powerful industrialised nations. The ground now appears nearly ready to include Russia as a full member.

The most important ques

tion of the Summit, that is integration of some selected East European states into NATO, although remained unresolved. there was consensus that the gap between the western position of full integration and Russian opposition appeared to have narrowed somewhat.

Throwing her lot with NATO would certainly mean abandoning whatever pretense Russia may entertain to a big power' status if not 'super-power'.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union barely five years ago has traumatised the entire Russian population and we



The Horizon This Week Arshad-uz Zaman

Boris Yeltsin faces a monumental challenge on this question from his domestic critics. The thrust of NATO eastward is perceived among the Russians as a direct threat to her borders. There is, of course, talk of giving Russia a special role within NATO, but this does not sweeten the pill adequately for Russia.

have witnessed the emergence of ultra-nationalist Zhrinovsky. Alexander Lebed, the Security Chief of Yeltsin until barely three months ago, although does not speak the language of Zhrinovsky, flatters the ego of Russian nationalism. Yeltsin, therefore, has to tread a cautious path.

There are voices in the House of Congress sufficiently strident to cause some headache for Clinton. It is expected, however, that Clinton will be able to muster adequate votes for the passage of the relevant resolution concerning US-Russia relations. There has been a surprising highly respected voice that has been added to the chorus against the expansion of NATO eastward. That is the

War world. That brings us to the role of NATO since the collapse of the Soviet Union. NATO's essential function was the containment of the Soviet Union. The collapse of the Soviet Union preceded by the collapse of the Warsaw Pact comprising East European states robbed NATO of its raison d'etre. Yet NATO has been soldiering on if for no

other reason then because it is a

voice of George Kenan, who has

strongly castigated the pro-

jected role of NATO in post-Cold

bureaucratic behemoth and politicians may come and politicians may go but bureaucrats go on forever'.

Thus NATO instead of shrinking in a unipolar world has actually managed to grow in size. The leaders of NATO would be hard put to define its role in the post-Cold War world.

From a bipolar world during the better part of the post-Second World War, to a unipolar world since less than a decade, the world will inevitably move towards a multipolar world. In the early eighties, Paul Kennedy wrote a remarkable book 'The Rise and Decline of the great Powers'. In this book he forcefully argued how the decline had set in shortly after the Second World War in Russia and particularly the US. He quoted facts and figures to demonstrate how the decline had set in and drew some somber conclusions. The question before the Russian leadership is whether to integrate entirely with the West where the US calls all the shots. or emerge as one distinct pole in the multipolar world of the future. It is a tough choice but the Russian leadership must face it.

The Indian Scene: Fresh Elections in the Offing?

by Zaglul A Chowdhury

The BJP seems to be calling for fresh elections because it feels it can derive benefits from such an event. It recently forged alliance with the lower caste BSP in UP and Sikhs' Akali Dal in Punjab and won elections . . .

to withdraw the support it gave to the United Front government headed by H D Deve Gowda was in a way a bolt from the blue for the ninemonth-old government in India although such a development was not unexpected. The timing of the decision took many unawares — so much so that few Indian dailies which take severe effort in political reporting, in the world's largest democracy, could sense about it. The suddenness with which Congress president Sitaram Kesri accomplished the task of informing President Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma about his party's decision to withdraw support to the coalition government spoke of the unique capability of a person to hit the

Earlier, the 78-year-old veteran rose from relatively lesser important positions to become the president of the vast Congress party and he did it when his predecessor was in a real slippery ground - bogged down by a series of problems including corruption charges. P V Narasimha Rao had appeared almost invincible as party stalwarts Arjun Singh, then regarded second man only after him in the organisation, and another heavyweight from important Uttar Pradesh state Narain Dutt Tiwari, revolted but could cause little harm to Rao. In the national elections that followed. Rao's Congress suffered reverses and lost power and several names immediately figured to replace him; but Kesri's name was not there. Rao maintained his influence and remained firm in the saddle but a few months later when his position was compounded by more problems Sitaram Kesri emerged as the likely successor and became the Congress president. Narasimha Rao remained the leader of the Congress parliamentary party which gives tremendous clout because this position helps a person to become prime minister in the event the party is catapulted to run the government. Here too.

iron when it is red.

quite a lew names were being discussed if Rao had to quit the position. But when he had to relinguish it following increasing pressure from the party, it was once again Kesri who was on the top. On one hand, he saw to it that Rao was gone and on the other, rallied important players of the game within the party behind him so that he could become the leader of parliamentary party without any Sitaram Kesri was a key lig-

ure in the party, who efficiently looked after the financial side of the organisation without being tainted by any charges and also contributed to its organisational strength. Still, only few in India even a year ago could predict that he would at one stage adorn both these key positions. But for any leader with long experience and high ambitions, the zenith of career should remain incomplete it prime ministerial position eludes him and it is only normal that he would cast his eyes on that position, more particularly after being firmly placed on vital positions of a very big party. He had gone on record that Congress withdrawal of support to the UF government was not unlikely but few thought that he would strike when the time in no way seemed imminent. The budget was placed in parliament, India was in the midst of talks with Pakistan in New Delhi after a gap of three years and Indian capital was preparing to host the important meeting of Nonaligned foreign ministers. In that context such a decision by Congress was unlikely at that stage and also for the reason that the present Lok Sabha has not even completed one year of the five-year term. But the decision came — triggering political uncertainty in world's largest

Will the timing of Mr Kesri's move pay dividends to him? Will he be able to head a new government led by Congress which has only 140 seats in the 545-member lower house where support of 273 members is necessary to form a government? Will the United Front which is seeking to put up a brave face in this situation try to remain in power and win a vote of confidence on the floor of parliament by April 11? What strategy the largest party in the Lok Sabha, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of L K Advani and A B Vajpayee, will adopt in this fluid situation? Will the decision of the Congress boomerang on Kesri and spark off differences within the party for taking this decision much earlier than necessary, causing setback to Congress, or Kesri, the main brain behind this flux will eventually rule the roost by becoming more stronger? Much of all this will depend on the actions_of President Dr 8-D Sharma who holds the key to

crucial decisions. Narasimha Rao was favourably disposed to the issue of long support to the UF government, and he had also established a good rapport with Deve Gowda after the UF came to power. Although he had said that the Congress support to the government would be for full five years, it was assumed that the Congress would pull the carpet from under the feet of the government at an opportune time forcing midterm polls which may be two years after the government remained in power as Indian electorate would not like fresh polls within a year.

The UF is a combination of 13 parties ranging from leftists opposing the "dictates" of the World Bank and the IMF on the pretext of "reforms" to free-

market champion finance minister P Chidambaram. Harvard educated scholar, who left Congress before last elections on the issue of party's support to another party in his Tamil Nadu state. The UF government had many contradictions and many thought the Congress would hit when the coalition becomes vulnerable mainly under its own weight of differences. When Kesri started running his writ in the party, it was clear the withdrawal of Congress support would come much before than many expected but only few thought that it would take place even before the government could complete one year and its own contradictions came to the fore in a serious manner.

The Congress appears divided on the timing of the move. Former defence minister and Maharastra chief minister and former interior minister Rajesh Pilot does not seem to be satisfied with the timing of the move. But party general secretary Ghulam Nabi Azad and spokesman V N Gadgil said it was the right time for this decision. Many Congressmen keen to see the party back to power

feel this move may backfire unless the cards are played with extraordinary skill by Kesri. How can the party muster additional support which is to be more than 130 members to form the government? What was the calculations of Kesri himself when he took the decision? He can count on some regional parties or at best some small groups from the UF but that should be nowhere near the magic number. The question of BJP and the main constituents of the UF supporting Congress is out of question.

And what has provoked the

Congress president to take this step which many see as a gamble of high risk? His ambitions apart, his relations with prime minister Gowda was of late not going well. The two did not attend each other's Iftar party in the last Ramzan. Needless to say, the "Iftar parties" are found to be a political culture in India too as much as it is in Bangladesh. I remember attending "Iftar parties" when I lived in New Delhi in the early eighties and some of best such parties used to come from former central minister and Uttar

Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna and Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

The BJP seems to be calling for fresh elections because it feels it can derive benefits from such an event. It recently forged alliance with the lower caste BSP in UP and Sikhs' Akali Dal in Punjab and won elections to form government. If feels that

snap polls will favour it as party leader Pramod Mahajan visualises. As the situation remains fluid. Congress leaders are taking advice from former prime minister and Congress president late Rajiv Gandhi's widow Sonia Gandhi and the UF from former prime minister V P Singh and West Bengal's experienced chief minister Jyoti Basu. Both the men are regarded with

respect in Indian political circles. Can the UF win the vote of confidence in the house with less than 200 members of the group? It is unlikely barring unforeseen spectacular gains. The Indian developments have opened up an array of bewildering possibilities ranging from new coalition government to fresh elections much before the term of the present lower house. The situation has many bizarre features as timing of the

Congress move and possibility of strange line of alliances in quest of forming a new government and leaves one in wild guessing about the shape of things to come in India.

OPINION

Weekly Holiday — Is it a Dead Issue?

Pradesh chief minister

of weekly holiday to Sunday that was published in all dailies including the DS on 21.3.97. and the subsequent editorial (22.3.97) on it. In this connection several opinions were published in another English daily with the titles: 'About Friday and Sunday', 'Weekly holiday changed in Pakistan - a bad precedent' and a few more. All these have condemned the Pakistan government for changing the weekly holiday from Friday to Sunday. Some of the writers tried to arouse the passion in the name of religion. However, I was rather surprised to see such an outright condemnation of a democratic government on the plea of being a Muslim country. Equally surprised for not seeing the needed support for the change from

other quarters.

However, the four very important trade bodies have a very cogent reason for asking the weekly holiday on Sunday instead of existing Friday. The reason is the trade that we make with the other countries of the world who observe weekly holiday on Sunday except the Arab world. Besides, many countries observe also Saturday as a weekend holiday. Because of this we lose not two days alone but full three days (from Friday to Sunday) contact with our trading partners. Apart from business, we are being deprived of banking transaction too. It is known to all that Bangladesh is one of the (least) developing countries of the world. If we cannot harness our economic growth potential due to odd weekend holiday, we will lag behind the other developing countries. We are sustaining a great loss to our national economy due to Friday weekly holiday, that we can neither afford now nor in future. The loss in export trade is above 30 per cent of the total, and import also would be nearly to that. One may recollect that the Friday weekend was fixed by the military dictator Ershad 15 years ago to gain popularity among the simple Muslim community.

I think the business deals including the banking transactions should not be equated with religion. There are several Muslim countries of the world who observe weekly holiday on Sunday. They are: Malaysia, Indonesia the largest Muslim country in the world, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Tazikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan Kyrgyzstan, etc. In this connection, I would like to quote Mahathir Mohammad, the Prime Minister of Malaysia. He said: "As a developing country, we cannot have the luxury of having two days' weekend." This he made on a demand from some professional quarters

soon after he became the Prime Minister. Even all the SAARC countries other than Bangladesh now observe Sunday as weekly holiday. Same is the case with the other Far Eastern and communist countries. The people of most of the Far Eastern countries follow the Buddhist religion. As the English language has become the number one international language, same is the case with the Sunday weekly holiday. Before deciding for Sunday as a weekly holiday. I am sure, the Pakistan government must have looked into pros and cons of the situation. Here one should remember that the zeal of Pakistanis for religion is no less than any other country. Due to these facts, the people of our country ought to have congratulated Pakistan

government for taking such a bold step. Concerning the Arab countries, one should note a couple of things that prevail there. First is their fortune - oil wealth. Even those who do not have such a natural wealth, get immense benefit from those wealthy countries by getting employment on priority basis. The sole reason is that they are all Arabs. Second is the wealthy countries' development works that are done by the immigrants. It is due to this that almost all the decision makers and other mid-level officials enjoy long three-month holidays in a temperate climate mostly in Europe. Last of all is the weekly Friday holiday that continues since the day the Muslims have fixed their weekly Jumma prayers on Friday. It was not only the weekly prayers the participants performed but also the society's problems that used to be discussed at the mosques particularly in the early days of Islam. Because of these factors, they are observing the weekly holiday on Friday.

However, we can draw an analogy from Mahathir's comment that is mentioned above. Bangladesh, being one of the poor developing countries of the world, should not lose world's three vital business and bank ing working days. Furthermore. if Pakistan can switch over from Friday to Sunday, why Bangladesh cannot do it? The plea of being a Muslim country. and Muslims' weekly obligatory congregations for Friday prayer is not the valid reason for not to shift from Friday to Sunday The Friday prayer hardly needs half an hour. Those offices that work from 9 am to 5 pm, can complete Friday prayers in their one-hour lunch time. The others who work from 8 am to 2:30 pm, such as government offices, can have half-day work-

ing on Friday as Pakistan has Business leaders urge shifting Dr KM Maqsudur Rahman done it. That will be from 8 am to 12:30 pm. The staff can perform the prayers in the mosque nearest to their office. One will find a mosque everywhere within 10 to 15 minutes of walking distance from an office. One should remember that Islam is the religion for all the people, for all the places and for all the time. Furthermore, the range for prayer timings is big enough, even the Magreb timing nearly lasts for an hour.

Here I would give one of my

personal recollections about

Kuwait. While working in a hospital there, I had only 'outpatient' duties that used to run from 7 am to 1 pm in summer and 7:30 to 1:30 in winter. One day my Director learnt that by keeping the patient waiting. closed the door and prayed inside the room. She told me that my duty to attend the sick is the first and foremost duty. Not only that, she also advised me to make a very brief prayer while I attend the sick patients. That is "O Allah I pray to you in brief as I attend the sick persons. Please accept my prayer. She had also commented that Allah will accept your prayer (She herself was a pious person). Furthermore, she said that Islam is a religion that has a provision to perform the obligatory prayers at a later time. It is also said service to humanity whether in need or otherwise is itself a service to God. I found logic in it to serve the sick persons as it is one of the best way to serve God. However, it was the government policy, not only there but in other Arab countries too, that none should be kept waiting unless there is a valid reason. Furthermore, the banks there start working from 8 am to 2 pm and on Friday from 8 am to 12 noon. The supermarkets start non-stop working from 8 am to 10 pm. One supermarket used to remain open 24 hours a day. In all these establishments all the staff used to have their food during their working hours, and perform prayers too without stopping the service. Only the staff used to remain a little thin at the counter during the lunch and prayer time for obvious reason. That is what I have observed in the advanced countries of the world too. In order to achieve economic

development very fast, we should exploit time in an optimum way. Thus the whole country will get the benefit from shifting the weekly holiday from Friday to Sunday. Therefore, I would urge the conscious citizens to lend support to the demands of the trade bod-

The writer was a member of one of the professional groups while teaching in the Malaya University. Kuala Lumpur in the early eighties.

Cleaning up arsenic Sir, Water is one of the major means of transport of ar-

senic. Arsenic finds its way into the water supply systems due to geothermal activities, agricultural runoff and industrial discharge. The toxicity of arsenic is dependent on its oxidation state, chemical form and solubility in the biological media.

The toxicity scale of arsenic decreases in the order: arsine > inorganic As (III)>organic As (III)> inorganic As (IV)> organic As (V)> arsonium compounds and elemental arsenic. The toxicity of As (III) is about ten times that As (V). Arsenic is a cause for skin, liver, lung and kidney/bladder cancer.

Due to the carcinogenic property of arsenic, regulatory agencies are reviewing its maximum allowable concentration level in drinking water. The World Health Organisation (WHO) in 1996 has revised the maximum contaminant level for arsenic (10 microgram per litre) in drinking water re-

Various treatment methods have been adopted to remove arsenic from drinking water under both laboratory and field conditions in different countries. The major mode of sequestering arsenic from water is by physico-chemical treatment methods. The various methods include: a) adsorptioncoprecipitation using iron and aluminum salts, b) adsorption on activated alumina/activated carbon/activated bauxide, c) reverse osmosis, d) ion exchange, and e) oxidation followed by filtration.

In general, removal of arsenic (III) is lower as compared to the removal of As (V). Being a non-ionic species in the neutral Ph zone, As (III) is not removed by adsorption since no electrostatic attraction exist and the number of adsorption sites available for As (III) are less than that for As (V). This makes it important to identify the species of arsenic before selecting the treatment scheme. The valence state of arsenic is very important in determining the optimum treatment process to be incorporated, since the arsenic removal efficiency of most conventional processes are balance dependent. Oxidation of As (III) using chlorine, potassium permanganate, ozone and other oxidants to As (V) and removal by any of the treatment options available is generally followed.

Many treatment schemes can be effective for removal of a specific inorganic contaminants but no single treatment technique has been found to be effective for all of them. Pilot tests should be conducted prior to selection of a specific treatment process.

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Hats off to Taramon Bibi

Sir, On March 26 night while I tuned to BBC 2 at about 11.25 pm, I was mesmerised by the picture it was telecasting. It was our Independence Day, BBC broadcasted a very special programme on our war of independence with special features -Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib's active leadership, imprisonment in Karachi, freedom fighters' attack, India's help, Bangabandhu's return to independent Bangladesh, becoming the Prime Minister, murder with family at his residence, Ziaur Rahman's coming to power. democracy's back in 1991, and AL's return to power in 1996.

They also showed interview of Tiger Siddiqi, Captain Rafiqui Islam, Dr Kamal Hossain. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Major Arora (to whom General Niazi surrendered), and

The documentary, the producer of which was John Das, BBC 2, finished with the comment that it's been 25 years since Bangladesh was born as an independent country for the interest of the common people, in the words of Taramon Bibi a guerrilla fighter: We fought for bhat-kapar, but we suffered from TB, now old, and can't afford simple bread and butter'. But Bangladesh still remains as the poorest country in the world.

Taramon Bibi rightly voiced her demand that we fought for a better country, but we are still

as poor as we were, even poorer. Taramon Bibi, I felt sorry for you. I was taking dinner at that time when I was watching that programme, and I pushed my plate away. How could I swallow English chicken while Taramon Bibi, who sacrificed herself and her family, and the like for our freedom, was demanding 'deshi' chicken.

Taramon Bibi, tomake

MG Dastagir England.

Action against faulty vehicles

Sir. On the west coast of America, in California, then in the east coast, in New York, Connecticut and Boston, watched hundreds of thousands of motor vehicles plying on the streets. What made me very surprised that not a single vehicle emitted slightest black smoke.

But what do we see in our country? Buses, trucks, even cars are emitting black smoke, sometimes it is so dense that it seems a smoke bomb has been hurled. It is polluting the atmosphere at such a degree that our people are suffering from various diseases - respiratory disease has become a major problem in our country.

I don't understand as to why our government is not paying attention to this health hazard. How these faulty vehicles pass the fitness test and get clearance? It is very deplorable that those who are in charge of this department, do not hesitate to allow this, in exchange of some personal gains.

I request the Prime Minister to give attention to the air pollution of our country, which is making people sick, and do something about it, otherwise our future generation will be in a worse condition and our country will be unfit for living.

Traffic department must be warned that if they reflect their duty in this way, stern action will be taken against them. I urge the government to take immediate action and to remain always vigil about it.

Nur Jahan Boston, USA