garies, there are ample spots to

attract tourists. Having the

longest sea beach, the largest

mangrove forest and many

historical and religious trea-

sures, it could have been an in-

teresting destination for the

tourists. However, ignorance of the governments and to a

greater extent their negligence

towards tourism development,

has left this country uncounted

In fact, with a diversity of

landscape and a composite

storehouse of so many ancient

civilisations, the South Asian

region could be the world's best

tourists destination. Yet, it's

share of global tourism in only 0.8 per cent. According to statis-tics, of about 600 million trav-

elers across the world, only 4

million visit this region. One big reason for this dis-

mal scenario is the lack of

proper promotion. The region

has often been the theatre of

conflicts besides much of it be-

ing subjected to natural disas-

ters. The lack of economic

strength have also kept the na-

tions of the region busy in managing the infrastructure for

basic needs like food, clothing,

shelter and healthcare. But

what is true is that the region

could never assess the value of

its own treasures and thereby

make good uses of those. Singa-

pore with practically no histor-

ical or geographical attractions

pull 7 million tourists every

been a boon for the region to

overtake its poverty and im-

Asian region should not miss

the bus that could take the mil-

lions of its impoverished people

ternational Chamber of Com-

The writer is Secretary of In-

to a frontier of prosperity.

merce (ICC) - Bangladesh

Tourism, in fact, could have

in the map of world tourism.

TOURISM

South Asia Holds Promises, but... by Mohiuddin Babar

N the early days, travelers were either soldiers, priests Lor merchants who set out on long treks or voyages to capture new lands, win souls and amass fortunes. Many traveled from place to place either to escape nature's vagaries or in search of better food and shelter. Such kind of travel used to take place either under compulsion or

upon temptation. However, with the passage of time, travelling brought in a new essences by adding a flair of enjoyment to it. It soon became known as "tourism". Today tourism is perhaps the biggest socio-economic activity in the world with many societies or communities depending on it for survival. Thanks to the revolutionary development in communication system in the world, which directly and substantially contributed to the growth of tourism as a high-

profile socio-economic activity. It is absolutely undeniable that tourism is the single largest productive sector in today's world. While it compasses a wide variety of enterprises ranging from hotel to a small boutique selling indigenous artifacts, it is the largest sector with 10.7 per cent of the world's workforce employed in different tourism related activities. It is not merely satisfying human' desire to see new places, people and culture but that it has become a strong well-organised commercial endeavour which is providing sustainability to the pursuit of living for millions of life and living.

Besides infusing widespread development in the economy, tourism unveils cultural barriers. When people from a bustling city in North America visit a remote sleepy mountain village in Bhutan, there is a great inter-action between the two societies differing at all length in language, culture, food etc. At the end of the day, the visitor returns home with a note of satisfaction not only for his value for money achieved through knowing the unknown but taking back the bits of a living experience of a culture far away different from his own.

On the other hand, the people visited not only feel proud in the exposition of their culture and heritage, they too pick up certain elements of another culture. That is how knowledge and often wisdom are transferred from one place to another, from one society to another. In modern days, even -technology is being transferred through tourism.

With massive development in science and technology. tourism has been receiving even further boosts. People can now fly or drive from one place to another easily, no matter what may be the distance. Social uplift has also propelled security and comfort which all together arouse great amount of enthusiasm for people to become tourists. Despite the recession in the seventies, tourism was one sector which kept an upward trend. This very fact enIn Bangladesh, though a small country and more often known as a land of natural vagaries, there are ample spots to attract tourists. Having the longest sea beach, the largest mangrove forest and many historical and religious treasures, it could have been an interesting destination for them.

dorses the truth that tourism is a more tangible industrious sec-

Despite all these developments, not all regions, more precisely, not all countries could ensure progress in tourism. Though many countries have comparatively better treasures, natural or manmade, they were yet to tap these resources which could funnel lot of direct economic benefits to their own people and society. Tourism development thus has been uneven around the world.

The region of Asia as a whole lacks badly in tourism though it is perhaps the richest on earth in terms or possessing wide ranging rare treasures, either natural spectacles or manmade wonders. The towering Himalayas; the jungles and beaches along the coast of Thailand, Myanmar, Bangladesh and India; the rugged mounand passes in Afghanistan and northern Pakistan; the coral reefs in the Maldives and the Philippines etc., are all but absolutely rare views of natural heritage of this earth. On account of man-made treasures too, this region, cannot be matched with any other part of the world. The Great Wall of China, the Taj and palaces in India, the ruins in Mohenjodaro in Pakistan and in Paharpur in Bangladesh, the Angkor in Cambodia etc., are just few historical monuments that can surprise and satisfy people from anywhere on earth. However, despite all these, the region is yet to encash on such

In fact the touristic resources in South Asian region have always been downplayed or ignored. The governments in the countries of the region could never recognise their potentials properly and thus failed to develop this sector. Some countries have of course realised lately the high potentials of this sector and started taking some programmes to invite tourists. But the initiatives still look lackluster.

For example, in India tourism has already become thriving and currently it is the country's third biggest foreign exchange earner. With enormous wealth for touristic pleasure, India should have taken a lead in the world of tourism. It is often said that visiting as many places in India with diversified culture and nature and a mammoth stock of historical relics, one would have traveled the whole world. Yet, the flow of tourists into India is absolutely low. It attracts only 0.4 per cent of the world's tourists.

In Bhutan, the foothills of the Himalayas and perhaps one of the most exotic travel destinations on earth, tourism development has been at snail's pace. With beautiful hills and valleys and attractive spots for trekking, tourism could have been the foremost foreign exchange earner for this landlocked and resource-starved country. But the restrictive policies of the government and the sheer lack of promotion eclipses this wonderful part of the world.

Pakistan, which was for a long time the cross-point of several civilisations, have a very enriched stock of diversified culture, history, tradition along with settings of nature like desert and mountains. Yet tourism does not receive any significant attention in this country. With its strategic situation as a gateway to the east north and west, Pakistan could have been the most attractive destination provided there were enough opportunities for tourists.

It is only Thailand and Sri Lanka that have made great headway in developing tourism. Thailand was quick enough to jumpstart the infrastructure development in the seventies and engaged in hectic promotional activities in the west to attract western tourists. From mid-seventies till late-eighties, tourism rose at a staggering pace and contributed significantly to the national bourse such that the country could offset much of its earlier impoverished look and become a rapidly growing economy in the

Sri Lanka too took some right steps and developed its tourism base despite the long running ethic strife. Tourism has become the third largest foreign exchange earner for the country after tea and remittances from Sri Lankan expatriates. Only two years back, it was in the fourth place. In Bangladesh, though a

small country and more often know as a land of natural va-



Kaptai Lake, CHT.

The State of Urban Dwellings in Khulna City by Ahmad Shikha Akhtari

If we fail to control malpractice just now we will obviously get a chaotic environment with ill-designed buildings without consideration of the climatic and social aspects.

ESIGN of an urban dwelling is the most frequent task an architect needs to encounter in his/her professional life. Majority of the buildings in the whole world are dwelling houses. As a matter of fact, this is the point where man entered into civilisation. Man left the branches of the trees and started living on land building their dwellings - civilisation began. After that a long period has passed. Villages, trade-centres, townships, cities and megacities have grown up as human population had increased, and their activities ex-

panded. Khulna is such a city in Bangladesh with around 700,000 population, and it is increasing everyday. As a result, the city is expanding. About a hundred years ago it was a mere sub-divisional town. Now it is a Divisional HQ. and like all big cities, with a Municipal Corporation (KCC) and a Development Authority (KDA) to look after and manage the city-life smoothly.

The most renowned residential areas of the city, at present, are Nirala Residential Area and Sonadanga Residential Area, both are at the outskirts of the city. The former is by the side of Khulna-Shatkhira Highway and the latter, by the side of Khulna Bypass Road, with arable lands on one side and the main Khulna City on the other side of each area. Both the areas were acquired by KDA for residential purpose and developed with roads and other infras-

Strategising for the

Battle

Ahead

HE Women's Political

omen (NCW), the Centre for

Social Research, the Joint

Women's Programme, Mahila

Dakshita Samiti and the

Women's Political Watch met

recently to get "conceptual

clarity" regarding the 84th

Amendment Bill - allocating a

33 per cent reservation for

sembly seats - which is ex-

women in Lok Sabha and As-

Group, comprising the

National Commission for

tructures, and leased out to general members of the public making plots of various sizes at the rate of Tk.10,000.00 per katha in the early 1980's. At present the rate at which the plots are being transferred is around Tk.100,000.00 per katha. The escalation in price of land, particularly the urban land, is the highest. The construction cost of a moderate 4storied building ranges from Tk.600.00 to Tk.800.00 per square foot (sft). (The soil condition ie the load bearing capacity of the soil of Khulna is very poor in general). It, therefore, appears costly as well as delicate from the rest of the coun-

try, to contruct a dwelling here. Any construction needs professional care, if not for any finer aspects, at least for the safety and security of the occupants and/or users and their belongings. In fact, practically no building form is dominant in or around the locality. This, probably, is because most of the buildings were designed by the builders, or, at the most, by people who are not trained for the purpose. Virtually no role of an architect was there, so that, some form of architectural fea-

tures could be expected. There is no attention in the spatial organisation even in the recently built buildings, and functional requirements were solved very poorly wasting lot of space, and without any climatic and environmental considerations. Architecturally, most of the buildings are chaotic; therefore, uneconomi-

pected to come up for debate in

the forthcoming session of Par-

liament. Senior Supreme Court

Advocate Rajeev Dhawan, who

was invited to be part of the core group deliberations, was of the

view that the best strategy

would be to stand united against the dilution of the earlier de-

mands and "go for 33 per cent;

demand for reservation of OBC

and minority women within

the 33 per cent reserved seats

should be dealt with at the po-

litical and not at the constitu-

tional level. The women's

groups are seeking an appoint-

ment with Prime Minister Atal

Behari Vajpayee to reiterate

their demand for the tabling of

the 84th Amendment Bill in the

coming session. In the words of

NCW member, Syeda Hameed,

they feel "more prepared now."

He maintained that any

in fact I would recommend even

50 per cent."

cal both in consideration of space utilisation and structural system. This is because, people who were engaged to design these buildings were not trained to handle such aspects. And, this could be possible because of negligence or maybe corrupted role of the responsible organisation. Although there are specific laws in this respect formulated by the Government of Bangladesh through its Ministry of Works, it seems there is no government control over the matter.

Most of the buildings using corridors for circulation which is directly wastage of space and uneconomic since construction of each sft of space cost, as said earlier, Tk. 600.00 to Tk. 800.00. Unfortunately, often the unlawful practitioners keep the unaware owners of the buildings blind in this respect. So the owners do not get opportunity to bother for this wastage of money.

One more factor seemed to be responsible for such reluctance of the owners. They build these buildings mostly for rental purpose. Their main target is to let out these buildings taking advantages of the huge influx of people without considering their practical requirements that only an architect can consider and effectively solve. They are made to understand by a group of people that payment to an architect is wastage of money - it's a great saving if they do not go to an architect. So, they (owners) remain deprived from an architect's job

that could provide them with a better plan, ideas, and solution, saving construction cost as

Payment of professional fees to an architect or a consultant seems to be the hardest job for an owner. Sometimes some people go to an architect without having a clear idea of what is to be expected. They think that getting some drawings for approval is the only work - and an architect is just a beautifier. Naturally they need to be paid very little. How much a few lines can cost - after all these are not bricks, cement or steel! In most cases they, therefore, get the design done and get it approved from the authority through draftsman or the constructors under a single package contract. The authority knows everything and understands that this practice is illegal but remains silent, that rather encourages this type of practice in

a passive way If we fail to control this malpractice just now we will obviously get a chaotic environment with ill-designed buildings without consideration of the climatic and social aspects. And it is also true that people will continue living in these unhygienic and unsafe houses paying an unreasonable rent because they would be left with no alternative.

This article is written on the basis of information collected through physical survey by the writer who is a Lecturer, Architecture Discipline, Khulna Uni-

Still No Equality in the Labour Market

■ N the last 20 years women have provided the bulk of new labour supply in developed and developing countries. But while school enrolment rates have risen for girls and women, and female students have proven their ability to be as good as, if not better than boys, their academic performance has not translated into correspondingly equal employment and

training opportunities in the labour market. So says the International Labour Órganisation's recent World Employment Report.

The ongoing economic changes at the global level and concomitant technological changes have reduced the demand for low-skilled workers. a category over-represented by women. Part-time or temporary work is more common among women than men.

While these forms of employment may provide some flexibility in balancing a job with family responsibilities, "much of it is involuntary and tends to be poorer quality em-ployment than full- time work in respect of pay, benefits, security, career prospects and access to in-firm training," according to the report.

WFS/News Network

Teachers as Humanists

by Dr M Habibullah

Education and good health go together to drag out a nation out of darkness, despair and deprivation. Right to education and right to medicare are part of human rights for which social leaders should be vocal.

teacher at the university Alevel is expected to play three roles: (a) a classroom disseminator of knowledge; (b) a discoverer and inventor of new knowledge through research; and (c) a social reformer through community involvement by which acquired knowledge and ideas get publicity and actionorientation for the policy formulators of the nation. Society expects a teacher to contribute as a friend, a philosopher and a guide in strategy development. A teacher can fulfil societal expectations when he gets proper training and schooling right from childhood and is reared in ideal social conditioning. Psychologists say that one's perceptions, values, norms and attitudes towards life and living are shaped by this socialising process. Plato's advice "know thyself" is meaningful since man is required to know the purposes for which he has been created by the Creator. Islam, Buddhism, Christianity and Hinduism have all directed followers to love the Creator through love extended to distressed human beings. One who takes teaching as a profession is expected to have developed this philosophical orientation, essential for disseminating knowledge gathered through reading of books and journals as well as facts and ideas obtained through research.

poverished edifice. It is a kind of continuous granular foreign Amartya Sen was brought up and educated in the humanist direct investment which help in environment of his family and stirring a rapid economic recovery and flourishment. With his missionary school. He grew their economies not so strongly up among Muslim youths and interacted with people having based, the nations in the region could perhaps do better in formsympathy and empathy for the working class. He was a school ing a nexus to develop a conboy when the 1943 famine occerted touristic infrastructure and trumpet promotional activcurred. I was a direct victim of that famine. I was a student of ities. Tourism should be given thrust in joint conformity. class seven. The memory of the '43 With so much to offer. South

famine came fresh in my mind in the early eighties when I read Prof. Sen's article "Food Problem: Theory and Policy" published in Third World Quarterly, vol. 4, No. 3. In our study on Marketing of Jute, we found

growers were not getting fair price due to imperfect marketing system. Prof. Sen revealed the imperfection of rice marketing. Rice was there but not available in the open market. It was partly a case of manipulation by traders who hoarded rice and created artificial scarcity. Prof. Sen's research finding "Food availability per head is rather a poor indicator of starvation, major famines having occurred without significant reduction in the ratio of food to population" is quite revealing. Bangladesh is still not self-sufficient in production of food. Import is a necessity. For equitable distribution between rural and urban areas, the government follows a policy of procurement from those having marketable surplus. Those in charge of food management may benefit if they remember that 1943 famine took place in a year of better food availability. Policy planners may re-examine their income distribution strategy in the light of povertyline. Economists sold to crude capitalistic framework and market mechanism favour uneven distribution of national income which they believe to be more conducive for saving and capital formation by the affluent section. We boast of percapita income having risen to 250 US dollars but forget the fact that top 20 per cent enjoy some 80 per cent of national income while more than fifty per cent live below the poverty line

most everyday due to deprivation. These people are passing through famine day in and day The Nobel Laureate committed to welfare economics came to Bangladesh when government in power is committed to

- food items being rationed al-

the philosophy of helping the working class people who can hardly meet basic needs of food, clothing, shelter and medi-care. A humanist finds joy by serving the creation of God. he finds divinity latent in man's mind. A researcher finds the truth after carefully collecting data and

analysing them objectively. He shows how things should be for the sake of social justice. Prof. Sen has done that appropriately through research.

A resource starved nation has to use its scarce wealth on the basis of opportunity cost Those who invited the Nobel Laureate should re-activate their poverty fighting efforts after careful cost-benefit analy-

Today empowerment of women and discrimination against women are being talked about. Let us test Sen's hypothesis "Discrimination victimises women more than those lost through lack of nutrition and medicare". Let us study how the richer section benefits at the cost of the poorer section. We have seen that our under-privileged people want work to earn, they do not want doles or chari-

Sen's empathy for the working class people was ex-tended to the student community also. Last September, I went to Oxford and read a news item to the effect that Prof. Sen as Master of Trinity College, Cambridge sent a letter of apology to an English girl who sought admission into Trinity College but got frustrated when a member of Admission Committee taunted her working class background. The news led me to think of my behaviour towards my students at the University of Dhaka. This thinking prompted me to write these few lines. Prof Sen opened our eyes. Education and medicare which constitute two of his research areas are also two of our major concerns. Nobel laureate Tagore has correctly diagnosed in his "Sheser Kabita" education as touch-stone. Education and good health go together to drag out a nation out of darkness, despair and deprivation. Right to education and right to medicare are part of human rights for which social leaders should be vocal.

The writer is a Professor of Accounting, Dhaka University.

Alive and Well in Old Age: A Positive Attitude

by Dr M Zakir Husain

T is a wonderful time to be alive and well. Old wisdom Land new science have given us fresh new insights. We can be old without being miserable or morose. What we need is to wear a positive outlook and attitude. rather than be negative and despondent. Yes, we can chose to feel sixty years young and not forty years old. We need not resign when we retire nor need we withdraw from the world around us and return to seclusion. With healthy positive attitude, old age can be a time for great enjoyment rather than loneliness, misery, and ill

Better be Joyous and Not Jealous

Thanks to science and health care, childhood deaths are on rapid decline; many of us can expect to reach ripe old age way beyond 60 years. Science tells us that our emotions do have a direct effect on our body functions and thereby on physical health and well being. Love and hate, hope and fear, pain and pleasure are not just contrary experiences but do have positive and negative impact on our physical health. Emotions are not mere temporary events; they produce bio-chemical and electro-medical effects in the brain cells, influences hormone release and affects the immune system too.

While hormones regulate many body functions, the immune system is essential for defence against infection and illness. Thus there is a direct link between our emotions and how our body functions. To put it simply, negative thoughts like jealousy, hate, fear produce bad chemicals in the body while joyful and caring emotions produce good chemicals and reactions. It is better to be joyous rather than be jealous.

At the most elementary level, the human body - all parts of it - is a mass of hundreds of billions of molecules.

These molecules in the living body cells are in constant vibration and when in balance these are "dancing" in perfect choreography and the body is functioning well. When we have pleasurable, loving, and cheerful thoughts we create positive vibrations in our body cells; in the process we minimise the negative effect of bad chemical products and neutralise many harmful substances. On the contrary, anger, ha-

tred, fear and jealousy create bad vibrations, upset the balance, and release harmful and constricting chemicals. Many will know from experience that extreme anger or emotional outburst of hatred can reduce blood supply to the heart and even bring upon a heart attack. The burden of negative emotions will bring depressive mental states, lower body resistance, and cause disorders of sleep, anxiety, or even physical illness. Depressive mental states are damaging. Why the should we nurse hate or jealousy and not love and compas-

Food and Health: Better to be Conservative

The food we eat has a significant role in keeping good health. But more food is not better health. In old age we do not need the same high energy food that a growing child or a young person needs. It is ironic that due to ignorance or negligence. the more affluent class suffer from malnutrition due to overeating while many more cannot afford to eat even the bare minimum food. Excess of food and idle life style is clearly a cause of ill health in any age. specially in old age. No wonder, a lean and wiry person weighing 60kg, rather than 90kg, at 60 years is perhaps healthier, more active, able to enjoy life. and will live longer. Of all foods, refined sugars, fats and oils are best avoided or reduced:

more whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and green salads are highly recommended.

In fact, as a rule, more than half of old age diet should be uncooked natural foods. As the old proverb suggests, we should eat to live and not live to eat. It is as true today as it was ages ago. Like positive thoughts, light, moderate, and intelligent diet protects body, prolongs life, improves body efficiency. No wonder then those who eat a largely vegetarian diet and eat moderately, and exercise regularly have low blood pressure, lower rates of heart and degenerative diseases. Yes, what we eat does matter but what eats us from within matters even more. Living in

Companionship Thanks to slow but certain

breaking up of extended families due to urbanisation, migration, and relocation, many elderly parents and grandparents are left to live alone. Apart from lacking care, they also lack companionship. Left alone and uncared for, the elderly get depressed, lonely, unrelated and their health declines rapidly. They just wither away in the absence of physical and emotional stimulation the essence of life and living .

I believe one of the reasons why the elderly people in the Orient - notably perhaps in Japan and Korea - live happier and healthier is that there are more three generation families living together even in these modern times. And the old age homes in the West are filled with people who are biologically living but many are senile and virtually "vegetables" as most of them live away and are left alone. The message is clear. Do not abandon the old parents, try to adjust an accommodate; it can be mutually supportive and satisfying inspite of some inconveniences.

I would recommend that the elderly people should spend

more time with the young in age and at heart. That is the recipe for them to rejuvenate and remain physically and mentally alert, alive and stimulated. Most people in old age feel the world has stopped when they retire from work; they have this mind set of regressing into seclusion, diffidence; they become sedate, sad, and they are left to ponder; eventually they just disappear from view.

But there is no need to be trapped into this role model. Staying with the young will help. A strong desire to live a long useful creative life will improve chances of actually achieving that. A positive outlook and refusal to slide into passive resignation will sustain a strong will to live, to do new things, to create ideas and thoughts, it will enhance self esteem and prolong life. It is better to add life to years than

to merely add years to life. Take the Rough with the Smooth

Life is never an uninterrupted, smooth sailing. It has its ups and downs, highs and lows. Old age with its infirmity is part of a normal life; we must learn to accept gracefully and thankfully all the good things that life gave us rather than only sulk and regret. That will give us strength and resilience. make us accept good things with grace and unpleasant things with equanimity. Humility and resilience will let us eventually survive whatever

turmoil life may throw us into. Let us also be philosophical. Death is an inevitable fact of life; life is merely an interlude and there is no final death if we take the view that all forms of life is an unending continuum. Who knows what life after death? Death as we know it may merely be a transition. So what is there to lament? There is everything to celebrate life when lived with little regret but much joy and wisdom.

by Jim Davis

Garfield ®









