

PREVENTION OF GLOBAL WARMING

Kyoto Protocol comes to life



HARUN UR RASHID

"magic figure" required for the treaty coming into force.

Possible reasons for Russia's approval

Until recently, Russia was not seen as interested in ratifying the protocol because it believed that it would harm its interests as an oil-producing country (it exports about 9.42 million barrels of oil per day). The change of heart was reported to be for many reasons and some deserve mention.

Some analysts say that Russia has made a deal with the EU. The EU

Global warming and the environment

The concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere helps determine Earth's surface temperature. Both carbon dioxide and temperature of the earth have risen since 1950. Scientists recently have found out that the emission of carbon dioxide has doubled during the last two years, raising fear that the world may be on the brink of runaway global warming.

Carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are trapped within the atmosphere of the earth that have

could not be identified.

Since the earth has been warmer, it has been reported that since the 1960s, global snow-cover has decreased by about 10 per cent, mountain glaciers in non-polar regions are in widespread retreat, and winter icy spells in the northern hemisphere are two weeks shorter than a century ago. The Khumbu glacier of Mount Everest is reported to have retreated by 5 km down the slope of the mountain. All these phenomena have been occurring because of global warming.

Other ice fields in the Arctic have

house gases continue to emit. Scientists have projected serious weather and climate changes. Siberia and Canada could experience a warmer, wetter climate. Other regions could suffer more frequent and severe droughts. Higher global temperature may give rise to storms and hurricanes (some Caribbean islands and Florida had experienced three hurricanes in one month with devastating loss of lives and property).

Rising sea level could engulf many island-countries (Maldives in the Indian Ocean and Tuvalu and Nauru in the Pacific Ocean). It may also adversely affect Bangladesh. Experts believe that the rise could affect more than 70 million people in China, 60 per cent of the population in the coastal districts of Bangladesh, 15 per cent of the population of the Netherlands and 10 per cent of Egypt's population in the lower Nile delta. Furthermore the US is not immune from such occurrence. It is reported that a 17,000 square km (size of Connecticut and New Jersey) in the US is expected to be submerged under water.

The Executive Director of the Nairobi-based UN Environment Programme Dr. Klaus Topfer states: "Ocean-related issues will almost certainly dominate the international agenda during this century. If as predicted the Earth's continued warming could accelerate sea-level rise and add up to 1 metre to the depth of our oceans."

Why was the Kyoto Protocol agreed?

International action on global basis is an imperative need to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases. An international agreement was negotiated in 1997 in Kyoto to limit the emission of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases that scientists believe contribute to global warming. The Kyoto Protocol requires participating countries to reduce emissions on average by 5.2

per cent by 2012 compared to 1990 emissions. It is the only international treaty that provides mandatory targets and timetables to reduce emission of gases for industrialised countries.

Another interesting feature of the Kyoto Protocol is the carbon-credits, the name given to undefined units designed to offset greenhouse gas pollution. The idea is that a country-polluter must purchase credits or face further action. It has been calculated that 20 trees offset some of the polluting effects of a car driven 100km. A common example being canvassed is the purchase or lease of forest areas in other countries, mostly developing countries, to act as "sinks" for the excess carbon being emitted by polluter-countries.

Conclusion

David Suzuki, the noted Canadian environmentalist, is of the view that due to environmental degradation, the planet has changed almost beyond recognition. He has further stated that, "Only a few decades ago, the quality of our water, soil, and air were radically different... If biologist are correct, virtually all wilderness on the planet will disappear within the next thirty years."

Global warming is a threat to the mother Earth and its inhabitants. It is a global problem and it has to be addressed globally. The slogan is: "Think globally but act locally." This generation must make decisions so that future generations will live within healthy environment. All countries must act together to reduce the greenhouse gases protecting the Earth, now and into the future, backpedaling the single-minded pursuit of profit and growth by emission of greenhouse gases.

Barister Harun ur Rashid is a former Bangladesh Ambassador to the UN, Geneva.

Partnership to end gender violence

SHAMIMA PERVIN

MORE than hundred years ago Ishwarachandra Vidyasagar (1820-91) commented sorrowfully: 'In a society in which the men folk have no mercy, no religion, no sense of justice, no sense of good or bad, in which mere conventionality is considered the chief activity and supreme religion, let no more women born'. Perhaps, male behaviour towards women compared to their time did not change much in Bangladesh.

Cross-cultural studies across the world show that predominantly men are the perpetrator and women are the victims of gender based violence. Therefore, men folk are always treated as opposition as far as violence against women is concerned. Except few cases men also very rarely come forward to challenge gender based violence whether it is occurring in private or in public. Therefore, predominant approach to eliminate or reduce gender-based violence is blaming the perpetrators and punishing them. However, following this approach no society claimed success to end violence against women, as it could not touch the core reason of violence.

Very often it is considered that men are biologically aggressive and violent. They use force in their everyday life to fulfil their biological demand. However, studies indicate that reason of violence against women is social rather than biological. All men even in a given society are not same. Men's attitudes, behaviour varies with their class, age, education and so on. Justification for male violence generally occur from gender norms -- that is, social norms about the proper roles and responsibilities of men and women. In most cases men are considered as providers and maintainers for the family. Conversely, women are expected to tend the house and mind the children and obey and respect their husbands. A man could be violent if he perceives that his wife has somehow failed in her role. For instance, in Bangladesh, women are abused at home just for not obeying husband, not having food ready on time, failing to care adequately for the children and old persons, going somewhere without husband's permission, refusing sex with and questioning husband about money or his extra marital relationship.

Predominant male and female roles are taught to boys and girls from early childhood, not achieved biologically. From childhood men learn to use violence if women are unable to fulfil their roles. Indeed an ability to dominate women is perceived as a display of manhood. Therefore, there seems little hope for reducing violence against women if present gender norms and roles continue. Men as well as women need to learn new social behaviour and norms. Therefore, building partnership with men to change their behaviour is an important part of any solution of violence against women. It is time to encourage men to examine their assumptions about gender roles and behaviour and become agents for change towards containing gender based violence. So work with rather than against men to develop more inclusive, relevant responses to violence prevention to benefit the society.

Shamima Pervin is National Expert, UNDP

BOTTOM LINE

Global warming is a threat to the mother Earth and its inhabitants. It is a global problem and it has to be addressed globally. The slogan is: "Think globally but act locally." This generation must make decisions so that future generations will live within healthy environment. All countries must act together to reduce the greenhouse gases protecting the Earth, now and into the future, backpedaling the single-minded pursuit of profit and growth by emission of greenhouse gases.

will support Russia's application for membership to the WTO in return for Russia's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. Second, Russia's approval of the treaty is intended to offset international criticism of its harshness towards Chechnya and the bad publicity it received in the West for the recent announcement of President Putin's political reforms that are seen to be contrary to democracy. Finally, since the treaty allows the sale of surplus carbon credits -- a surplus Russia expects to gain -- well-connected Russians will seek to profit from credit sales. Whatever may be the reasons, Russia's participation in the protocol leaves the US in the cold and isolated.

caused global warming. The more carbon dioxide is released in the atmosphere, the warmer the planet gets. Environmentalists say that the burning of fossil fuels (petrol, coal, etc) is poisonous to the earth because as the earth warms, the absorption of carbon dioxide by vegetation -- known as carbon sink -- is reduced.

It is reported that greenhouse gas emissions in the US will increase 43 per cent in that country between now and 2020. The petrol-producing countries are hesitant to accept this finding and they argue that the earth is getting warmer because of a natural change. Climate is never uniform and changes from year to year, decade to decade, because of the natural cycle that

also shrunk dramatically. In 2003, it is reported that large areas of open ocean have appeared near Russia, Alaska, and Canada. Some climate models project that the ice in the arctic region will be gone in summer by the end of the century.

Icebergs as big as 11,400 square km, four times the area of Long Island of New York, broke away from Antarctica in 2000. In March 2002, the collapse of the ice shelf, as big as 3,250 square km from Antarctic regioned serious fears of global warming and its catastrophic knock-on effects on low-lying lands including Bangladesh.

As ice melts and warmer seawater expands, the oceans will rise. How much depends largely on how much carbon dioxide and other green-

Ensuring road safety

SHAHIDUL AZAM

NOW-A-DAYS, 'Road Safety' has become a pertinent issue and has drawn attention of all in our country. Nothing perhaps can be more disturbing than the anomalous situation prevailing in our road transportation sector. Numbers of premature deaths and those becoming disabled are going to be phenomenal. Persons moving out and their mates and relatives staying back at home always remain tensed till they meet again. This is obviously regrettable. Usually a question peeps in our mind: why an accident must take place when we all are aware of the consequence? The reasons that come to mind then, are: a) Rush driving; b) Inconvenient road design; c) Lack of consciousness of the pedestrian; d) Ignorance of driver; e) Impatience of driver; f) Overloading; g) Over confidence and overtaking; h) Faulty movement planning. That means both slow and fast moving vehicles on the same lane, when it's obviously impossible for slow moving vehicles to keep abreast with the fast moving ones.

As road accidents have consecutively increased we must take some measures both short term and long term to contain it by bringing about change in the prevalent situation.

Short term steps

(i) Advertisements to make drivers, pedestrians and others concerned conscious should be publicised through radio, newspaper, television. Leaflet, poster etc. can also play an effective role.

(ii) In most accidents of our



PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

Discipline must prevail on the road

country pedestrians are victimised. They should be educated about how to use roads. Media can create public awareness through publicity. In our country, at the beginning general mass had little idea of family planning. Only publicity has created so much public awareness. Besides, drivers should show their patience. They can save themselves, passengers and the transport from danger if they drive with patience.

(iii) Different NGOs may be engaged in this activity. At present, NGOs are investing huge amounts of money in the fields of education, health and so on and so forth. We may try to convince them to keep funds for road safety activities, too.

(iv) Drivers physical and mental

conditions and, above all, training with attractive allowance are most important for safety of the occupants of the vehicles as well as safety of the pedestrians. In our country many accidents are caused by ill-trained drivers, some of them even having fake driving licence.

(v) Laws must be enforced and even reinforced, if necessary, to check overloading of all kinds of transports. Government has taken the initiative to resist it many times but it is yet to be visible. In this respect, labour unions may also be engaged to ensure implementation.

Long term plan

(i) Education about use of road, footpath, may be added in our syllabus in the lower classes and

advanced ideas may be incorporated in higher classes. This long-term plan, if materialised, will bring about a drastic change in our society; our next generation will gain clear knowledge about road safety.

(ii) Wrong geometric design of roads is one of the cardinal problems. Most of our highways were previously the district council roads, which have been upgraded. As a result, the horizontal alignments in some cases lack proper geometric standard. Unusual curvature on the highway often happen to be so narrow that the drivers can't notice the upcoming vehicle. Every year a huge amount of money is allotted for infrastructure improvement, but it isn't working in proper way.

(iii) The profit that comes from the investment on road safety is more than other fields of the transport. So both the government and other organisations should come forward to invest in and improve condition of road safety measures.

(iv) The slow moving and fast moving vehicles must be separated. Four lanes may be introduced on the highway for smooth moving of the vehicles.

Above all, effective enforcement of traffic rules is one of the prerequisites for road safety and accident prevention. Any good law without effective enforcement is nothing more than a piece of legislation. To ensure road safety, traffic police should be trained to direct their focus on safety issues and enforce law and rules concerned with safety related offences.

It's high time the government had taken urgent steps to formulate a road safety strategy and we all stretched our helping hands to make the motive a success. No more road accidents.

Shahidul Azam is a motor vehicle inspector of BRTA.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Mymensingh Road Division
Mymensingh

RHD Tender Corrigendum Notice

This is to notified for all concerned that the Tender Notice No. 04/EE/MRD/2004-2005 circulated vide this office Memo No. 2552/27 dt. 09-11-2004 has been amended for unavoidable circumstances as follows:

Sl. No.	Item	Invitation Tender Notice	Amended
12.	Tender last selling date & time	18-12-2004 in during the office hours	26-12-2004 in during the office hours
13.	Tender closing date and time	19-12-2004 at 12:00 Noon	27-12-2004 at 12:00 Noon
14.	Tender opening date and time	19-12-2004 at 3:00 PM	27-12-2004 at 3:00 PM
16.	Eligibility of tenderers	Amount of Turnover: Package No. 1: Tk. 9.00 crore Package No. 2: Tk. 5.00 crore Package No. 3: Tk. 5.00 crore Amount of Financial Capabilities: Package No. 1: Tk. 6.00 crore Package No. 2: Tk. 3.00 crore Package No. 3: Tk. 3.00 crore	Amount of Turnover: Package No. 1: Tk. 6.00 crore Package No. 2: Tk. 3.00 crore Package No. 3: Tk. 3.00 crore Amount of Financial Capabilities: Package No. 1: Tk. 35.00 lac Package No. 2: Tk. 20.00 lac Package No. 3: Tk. 20.00 lac

All other terms & conditions will remain unchanged. This corrigendum is part & parcel of the tender.

DFP-29042-4/12/04
G-1212

Md Jalilur Rahman Pramanik
Executive Engineer (RHD)
Mymensingh Road Division
Mymensingh

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ষ্টেশনারী ও ওয়াসরুমের মালামাল ক্রয়ের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

The Public Procurement Regulations, 2003 অনুযায়ী সিকিউরিটিজ ও এক্সচেঞ্জ কমিশনের দাপ্তরিক প্রয়োজনে ষ্টেশনারী ও ওয়াসরুমের মালামাল ক্রয়ের জন্য প্রকৃত সরবরাহকারী/বিক্রেতা প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট থেকে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। দরপত্র তফসিল প্রতিটি ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা (অক্সফোর্ডযোগ্য) মূল্যে ক্রিশমের প্রশাসন শাখা থেকে ১১/১২/২০০৪ইং তারিখ হতে ০৯/০১/২০০৫ইং তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সংগ্রহ করা যাবে। সীলমোহরকৃত দরপত্রসমূহ আগামী ১০/০১/২০০৫ইং তারিখ বেলা ১২.০০ টা পর্যন্ত কমিশনের প্রশাসন শাখায় রক্ষিত দরপত্র বাস্তবে দাখিল করা যাবে। দাখিলকৃত দরপত্রসমূহ এদিনই বেলা ১২.১৫টা উপস্থিত দরদাতাদের সম্মুখে (যদি কেউ থাকেন) খোলা হবে। কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা যে কোন বা সকল দরপত্র বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

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