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PHOTO: AFP

Sinking BTV

BTV standard is slipping, and it is apparently not aware of it, faced with political nepotism. Most likely it is helpless, as professional ethics cannot fight with misuse of political power and influence.

The package programmes do not click, for two reasons: out of date with the changing fast tempo of life; and, non professional technical quality. The story writers live in another world, and the script writers do not exert themselves. It is not possible for many viewers to watch all the episodes; hence serials maybe screened occasionally. Too much dialogue in television [audio-video] medium, unlike the radio, where sound effects are vital (compare with the BBC, for instance).

The pace of the TV stories is slow. Too much sentimental trash and reflective thinking displayed on the screen. Too much sedentary situations, and not much of movement and action. The ratio of static and dynamic situations has to be watched.

But how BTV competes with the other channels, considering the market share in advertising and artists' remuneration? The equipment have to be updated, specially with digital technology now firmly entrenched in the equipment market. The training side has loopholes; there are experts and advisers who do not seem to be able to exert much pressure (motivation at the planning stage). Discipline appears to be lax; and motivation is facing insurmountable barriers (same with the civil service). Time for an in-depth review.

Brain-drain is another headache for the masters of the show. As for the news, it is worth missing it now

transportation to take children to school, and also the only means of going to the nearest kitchen market- Hatirpool Bazaar and Karwan Bazaar. Now what are we supposed to do? Take a CNG autorickshaw to go to Hatirpool Bazaar or Karwan Bazaar? Does the government know the fact that CNG autorickshaws refuse to make short distance rides? And even if they do, the drivers demand Tk 20 or more, whereas a rickshaw would cost Tk 8 to 10.

The question is -- who are the VIPs? If a person stands at the head of the Bangla Motor crossing for 30 minutes and observes the traffic scenario, he will be able to count numerous or hundreds of private buses, state-owned buses, private cars, taxi cabs, CNG autorickshaws and even the Dhaka Municipal Corporation's over-loaded, foul-smelling waste disposal truck plying on the VIP road.

The real VIPs travel on that road only while making their way to office and back home. And then sometimes a few VIP cars move on that road during daytime.

Therefore, shouldn't the government make a very special route; perhaps an underground road to be used strictly by the VIPs? Why make the general public - especially the ones who can't afford to travel in a taxi cab or a CNG autorickshaw-- suffer?

The government should remember that Bangladesh belongs to the common people. The government and the VIPs are the lawmakers, which we all agree. But they wouldn't have got the portfolio if they were not elected to power by the common people.

I trust the government and the concerned authorities will look into

est. But it is also true that international politics and the role of the donors at times make our lives difficult.

I agree with you that we should wake up and make all out efforts aimed at development.

Shashi Khan
Bottala Bazar, Tangail

Saran's sermon

India is a big country. It is the largest functioning democracy in the world. It has inherent potential to play an effective role in international affairs.

India aspires for a permanent seat in the Security Council. High position of responsibility would warrant a dignified way of response, more with candour than with anger. Political or diplomatic outbursts only help to cloud the issues and push solutions to distant future. Reacting with humility even under severe stress does not necessarily signify weakness. India has to graduate itself to acquire more maturity. Others should be able to feel that thinking small with a fixed mindset has been abandoned.

One needs to sow seeds of trust. India has to act big. The approach needs modification.

Atiq Rafzal
Motijheel CA, Dhaka

The bottom line

I sympathise with the grievance and disappointment felt by the Hon. Finance Minister (DS 22 Feb) with the "critics" meeting over Bangladesh governance at Washington of all places! Unfortunately the fact is that it does reflects the lack of "respect, confidence, capability or whatever one may call it" of the donors. After all they felt that an evaluation is in order, so that they

An amused citizen
Dhaka

Traffic tangle in Dhanmondi

The traffic scene of week day mornings and afternoons is a much painful sight and experience for each and every resident of this once quiet residential area. Often exit and access from and to one's own abode becomes a difficult exercise. Much can be written about the man-hour losses, burning of health, and costly fuel, stress factors and pollution, and loss of tempers and manners.

Having schools in residential areas are a necessity to cater to local toddlers and is common around the world, though, coming with its contributory traffic snarls. Neither can we stop schools nor can we stop working. The world must go on. Therefore, we must try and find an acceptable solution. Two common solutions practised universally come to my mind. Local schools are primarily set up to cater to local needs and as such some sort of a restriction should apply in admitting children/wards from other areas. Who can deny the fact that our city of Dhaka is mushrooming with good schools?

If we once again take the cue from general global practices by moving our school timings backwards to start from 7.00am, we could avoid the traffic war with the office traffic, and thus obviate the tangle. Moreover, this switch in school timings will clear the roads by 8:00 and make them free to take on the office rush.

Appreciating that the child has to get up early, the old adage comes to my mind. 'Early to bed and early to

and love for his country.

I would sincerely call upon the government to intensify investigation for arresting the killers at the earliest.

Professor M Zahidul Haque
Dhaka

Hartal and anarchy

Are not we living in an accident prone, terrorist infested world? Is there any country on earth free of crime and criminals? Assassination of great men are a common universal phenomenon. Yes, our former finance minister's death at the hands of some miscreants was sure a tragedy.. Such a gruesome occurrence must not be seen in light of politics alone... for it is a national loss.

The entire nation must condole and mourn the death, but the opposition has monopolised the sad occasion, exploiting the rueful event to gain sympathy of the general masses. It is not surprising. But to create chaos and confusion is not lawful. Isn't it dangerous to teach the people to defy and deny authority? Is it right to excite, agitate and ignite the general public into lawlessness?

The tragedy of our nation is that common courtesy and manners are missing from the political arena. Blaming and accusing each other has become an evil tradition. The politicians are overlooking the fact that by condemning each other, they are actually condemning themselves.

It seems this sad death issue is being exploited and manipulated to dethrone the party in power.

The existing quarrel between the political parties does not bring any benefit, only trouble and misery. Should our politicians be allowed to paralyse the entire nation by calling hartal at will?

When shall we learn that hartal is akin to anarchy?

Syed Yusuf Bakht
Pushpayan, Shenpara
Sylhet-3100

Never-ending search

"Searching"-- that is the only thing my mobile phone set can tell ever since I have come to this place (only three hours journey from Dhaka). I have tried the one which is with its client all the time, in every corner and also the one which boasts itself of its 'wide' network. The end result is the same. Sometimes during a call, after 20 seconds the network totally collapses and we cannot hear one another but the connection remains for minutes if one does not end it.

If this is the situation in a place near Dhaka, it is beyond my imagination what is going on in the remote places.

We, the common people, have become hostage to the cell phone providers. The present operators are hell-bent on not slashing the call charge.

Some big foreign name should come to the field to liberate(!) us.
Saif, Dhaka

Helicopter controversy

I read your report "Helicopter Controversy" on 18 February. We understand that the government had failed to take a quick decision to send a helicopter to bring SAMS Kibria to Dhaka.

But my question to AL leaders, Kibria's friends, family and well-wishers is,

did they contact the high officials for arranging a helicopter ? Or did they take any initiative to hire any private helicopter to bring Mr. Kibria to Dhaka? Or did they contact any specialist doctors in Dhaka to send them to Habiganj, so that they could at least give some advice to local doctors to stop bleeding until better medical treatment could be provided?

We lost a worthy son of the soil, and are blaming each other for it!
Syed Muntazim
Atlanta, US

rise.....' Can anybody deny this?

NAhmed
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

How far away from safety!

Former finance minister SAMS Kibria died along with four other Awami League leaders in a grenade attack in Habiganj. Now it is a common thing in our country. The culture of violence had developed during the past AL regime.

The governments have failed to catch the killers. And the nation is paying a high price for that.

When will the criminals be brought to justice?

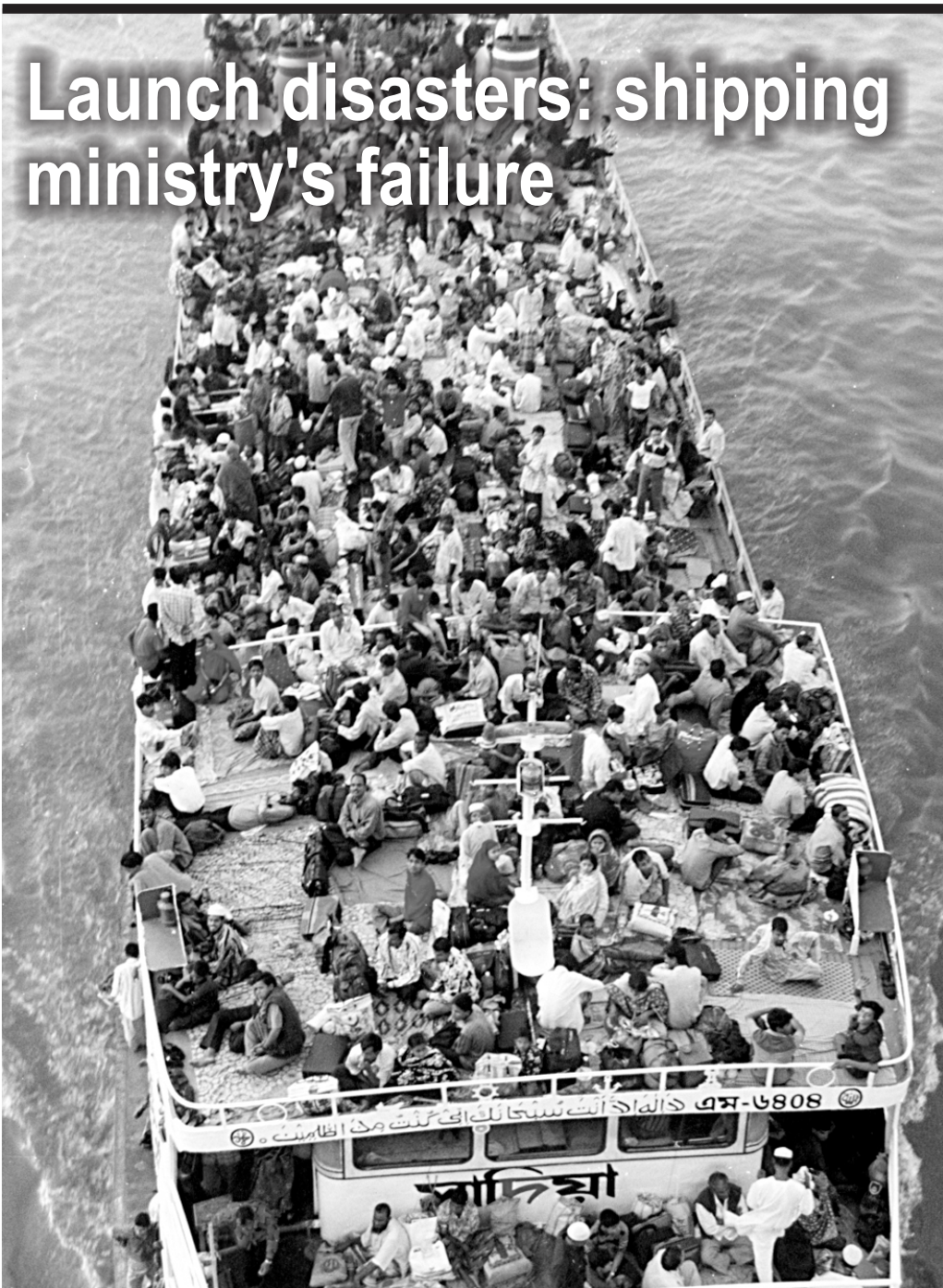
Mia Mohammad ,BK Ganguli Lane, Dhaka

SAMS Kibria

Former Finance Minister SAMS Kibria's killing is unfortunate and very much shocking. I strongly condemn this cowardly act. Meanwhile, I wonder why people on earth killed Kibria as we know he had no reason to have many enemies. He was an outstanding and dedicated civil service official. How could anyone kill him for political difference alone?

Although a political personality of the Awami League, SAMS Kibria was widely respected for his excellent intellectual abilities, wisdom

Launch disasters: shipping ministry's failure



STAR FILE PHOTO

Let me start from where you ended your editorial: "Clearly, it is not enough to condole the deaths of passengers, constitute a probe committee and hold out assurances afresh that steps would be taken to set things right which are destined to die down after the dusts settled."

Following are some numbers that I picked up from old DS archive issues from the web:

There were approximately 682 deaths between 1991-2001. In 2001, Colonel (rtd) Akbar took charge as the shipping minister. Since then, in less than four years, a staggering 1331 deaths (at least) occurred in river accidents:

MV Salauddin in May 2002 with 450 people.
MV Shubha in May 2002 with 30 people.
MV Mitai in April 2003 with 131 people.
MV Nasrin in July 2003 with 600 people (I was too sad and had to give up after this one and straightway went to the latest one), MV Maharaj in February 2005 with 120 people And this list sorrowfully is not exhaustive.

Is it a mere coincidence that we experienced more than double the deaths during our current shipping minister's era than the rest of the history of independent Bangladesh? Or is it his failure to ensure safety on river with the growing demand for the same?

In your editorial you've mentioned some important reasons for such launch accidents: overloading, flouting of navigational rules, inadequate and improper weather forecast, unsafe built of the river crafts. But what I so frustratingly agree with you is that "We have not learned anything from the major launch mishaps in the past." Not even our one-of-the-longer-lasting shipping ministers has learned anything, let alone taking responsibility for these deaths.

On such occasions, when faced with questions from media men, he says there shouldn't be any question of his resignation; that he is not at fault. He says he doesn't have funds. He says he has people who are corrupt.

Don't you think he should take the responsibility of it all?

He has come up with similar rebuts this time as well. If we search the database, we can find the same promises made last year as well.

Who'll ever prove him wrong? How many more deaths would we need?

I always try to see and portray the brighter sides of sto-

launch there's no way to travel to that place. The shipping ministry is almost inactive and is doing nothing to prevent such accidents.

According to my opinion, it is the result of the total failure of the shipping ministry. All passenger launches are travelling in an overloaded condition all the time. Besides, the launches are now acting as cargo vessels (i.e. carrying goods). I saw this during travelling to my destination in the southern region. The launch owners manage it by bribing the officials concerned.

We do not see any such recurrent launch disasters



PHOTO: AFP

ries from home usually. But today I close with a truly heavy heart, a truly heavy one.
Zeeshan Kingshuk Huq
Vietnam

I am greatly shocked by the recurrent launch accidents. According to a DS report (Feb 22, 2005), over 4,000 people died in launch accidents in the last decade. In the latest launch accident on Feb 19, so far 120 people are reported to have died and many are still missing. Where is the passengers' safety and what's the duty of the shipping ministry? My village home is situated in a coastal island. Except

elsewhere in the world. We are really an exception!

Passengers' safety should be a matter of top priority. Therefore, very stringent safety conditions are the ultimate necessity of passenger launches. It is the prime responsibility of the shipping ministry to ensure this safety. As things stand now, the ministry has completely failed to prevent launch disasters.

I strongly feel someone should take the responsibility and bring about the necessary changes.

MS Uddin, Kyoto, Japan



PHOTO: AFP

and then. The culture of neutrality has vanished in Dhaka (even in the BBC news and commentaries). The politicians in power depend too much on the captive media.

The journalists are under death threats, hence it is time to dump the Junk. Credibility? What is that?

Abu Abd
Dhaka

VIP roads

I have read the letter written by Sonia Ahmed captioned 'Road for VIPs', and I fully agree with the views she has expressed. The response from Mohammed Fahim Hara is also well expressed.

In my opinion the government, before taking a decision to turn every main road into a VIP road, should have taken alternative steps to ensure the general people are not affected by such situations which arise out of banning rickshaws. Rickshaws were and have always been the main source of transportation for short distance, or sometimes for long distance rides. For instance, the residents of Maghbazaar, New Eskaton and the adjoining areas depended on the rickshaw to make their way to the shopping malls like Eastern Plaza, Mutallib Plaza and the Bashundhara City, or even to the medical centres such as the BIRDEM Hospital or the PG Hospital. Rickshaws are also used as

the matter and work out plans and strategies to bring forth a sensible solution in order to mitigate the common people's sufferings.

Michael Matthias
New Eskaton, Dhaka

Time for overbridges

At the rate Satmasjid Road is becoming as busy as Motijheel or Elephant Road once was, the worst sufferers are the poor pedestrians. It is really difficult for people or mothers with kids to cross from one side to the other especially when traffic is constantly flowing up and down the streets day and night.

Perhaps, it is time to have a couple of overbridges erected at the busiest points. Will the mayor kindly consider our plea?

Lenin Gani
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Ms. French's call

I saw the message of a frustrated visitor called Anne French from London. Yes, Ms. French you are right about hartal and other obstructions on the way to our economic development. But you also said that Bangladesh has made a little progress. I am not sure this progress is because of the donor countries' contribution. I know that most of the politicians of Bangladesh are selfish and dishon-