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# Surface water



When climate and weather patterns are changing worldwide due to more carbon dioxide gas emission, it is imperative for human beings to dig more tanks and ponds, dredge more canals and rivers and construct more dams and reservoirs to retain much needed sweet water both for the peak and also the lean periods.

**Golam Ashraf**  
Baridhara, Dhaka

## A doctor's claim

I came across this amusing rejoinder by the chief physician of the Dhaka Central Jail hospital and couldn't help laughing. What does he think of the 140 million Bangladeshis? Surely to him we are all idiots or else how could he pose to be so naive?

Tomorrow the customs, the police, nay, all other agencies will also come up with such rejoinders and Transparency International will simply erase Bangladesh's name from the list of corrupt nations. What a wishful thinking!

I only wish the doctor's claim were true! But unfortunately he also knows that there is not even an iota of truth in it. And I am witness to it and seen several incidents of this nature. A glaring one among these was when a notorious criminal was enjoying VIP facilities in the PG hospital while supposed to be interned in the jail. Needless to say, he had not the slightest semblance of any illness.

So much for the honesty of the doctors, I am sorry to say.

**Ahmad Kamal**  
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

## Obsession with tradition

Shukla Mirza recently penned her reaction (3/21) to the business community's efforts to have holidays synchronised with Sunday to match up with global business flows. In the nostalgia for tradition that is our pathology, she protests, "It is our weekly Eid or day of celebration." Dear Mirza, why do we continue to hang on to traditions, while the entire world passes us by in development and trade?E According to the report "Human Development in the Islamic World," Bangladesh ranks 132d in the Human Development Index (HDI), and 73d in the Human Poverty Index (HPI).E Twenty-nine percent of the nations make less than \$1 a day, and 35% live below the national poverty line.E Synchronizing our holidays with the rest of the world would allow Bangladesh to bring in more trade, without which we can never hope to develop.

Do you think the people living below poverty line would rather eat bread, or have their holiday synchronised with jumma?E Here in New York, I've yet to meet a single

Muslim whose jumma practice is effected by having to go to work that day.E They go and pray on their lunch break. Then they get back to work!

Wake up before it's too late!  
**Naem Mohaiemen**  
Shobak, Org

## Where are we?

When I was a boy of seven or eight, I was not inclined to be first in the class because my class roll would be 1. That seemed to me a loathsome matter, in my view at that time my roll number should have been over 50. After fifteen years, I feel ashamed to introduce me as a citizen of this country for the reason that it has the top position in the list of most corrupt countries. Nobody wants to believe me wherever I go outside the country. They know it as a sanctuary of human traffickers, a country where the government has failed to contain terrorist activities and opposition parties do oppose only in the interest of opposition.

We want to see a country where the people, the government and its associates will work altruistically to uphold its image.

**Rejwan Ahmed**  
Moghbar, Dhaka

## Local builders

We are delighted to see the opening of Khilgaon Flyover, which was built by a Bangladeshi firm with its own resources. But at the same time, another huge project for the Jatrabari -Gulistan Flyover is awarded to a foreign company. I think we should all understand how much a local company have to struggle for survival nowadays with so much foreign influence on us. And after all that, when they show success, we should have some appreciation and have to reward them properly to expect more good of them. If we look at others, be it India or any European country, they all subsidise their local products at some level. As a well-known case, Europe is still subsidising "Airbus" and America is still subsidising "Boeing". That's how they have become the giants they are now. So I hope our highest authorities will think long term and do some favour to our local industries.

**Kamrul Naser**

20 River Road  
Piscataway, NJ

## Shifting hartal

The hartal date has been shifted to another date on the ground that Easter Sunday can be observed by the faithful. This has happened many a time before that politicians thought after the action decided or made. If they fail to foresee an event clearly marked on the calendar how can they foresee or plan actions for our future?

Field level workers should raise the issue with their party bosses.

**MM Haque**  
Jeddah, K.S.A

## Our consulates

Most of the high calibre civil servants are deployed overseas in High Commissions and Consulates whose primary task is to uphold the image of the country and promote business interests. I believe the government had instructed all consulate staff to be business oriented to patronise export and promote our products. My question is, did these civil servants get the message and were they properly trained for the task required of them?

Let me narrate my experience in Bangkok. We saw some fancy electronic goods in the departmental shops and thought of buying them. On the following day after many hassles we managed to find the BD Consulate in a small Road in Bangkok and we went to the office. There was a nice Thai lady receptionist who asked us to talk through a small window to somebody. We needed to know about customs regulations for imported electronic goods. We waited for quite sometime before a gentleman came near the window and when we asked about the customs regulations, he said "we do not have the booklet here and he said this with great apathy as if we had interrupted in his meditation." It flashed my memory way back to 1972 when I managed to run out of money in Delhi, and was taken by a kind Indian taxi driver to their Ashram where by chance I met a Bengalee employee who arranged cheap food & accommodation for a week until my next flight to London. What I am getting at is the humanity and decency of ordinary people

compared to some educated who consider themselves elite but are useless to the society.

I lived in Europe for a very long time and had seen how people from the small countries like Belgium, Austria and Italy behave with others. They all know that their rich lifestyle

improve our national image is to look into the mirror and ask ourselves whether we can learn from the modesty and values of others, irrespective of nationality & religion.

**MF Karim**  
Uttara, Dhaka

## Saarc and India

To be precise, looking the other direction there is much substance in Dr Rice's comments about working with India to improve the situation in this region. For example, India can act alone to reduce the trade balance with Bangladesh by reducing unfair trade restrictions over imports. About its internal political problems, it can do much to improve the socio-economic conditions of the underprivileged classes. (After all it is a class centred society). About these remedies Bangladesh has least to do from its side. It cannot decide on removal of unfair trade barriers, nor can it interfere in the internal affairs. Still, Saarc was a Bangladeshi concept. In an effective Saarc, like EU, there would be no scope for discussing such problems. However after the big neighbour was invited to G-7 or 8, Saarc's appeal might have become secondary to it.

**Mahmud**  
On email

## Motiur's grave-still in Pakistan!

For the last 34 years Flight Lieutenant Motiur Rahman's mortal remains are lying in the graveyard of the Pakistan Air Force. I think it is high time that we bring his remains back from Pakistan. The Bangladesh government should request its Pakistani counterpart to hand over the remains of a national hero. An American soldier's dead body (who died in the Second World War) was moved from Comilla Commonwealth Graveyard in the 1960's. So this kind of practice is not unknown.

**Sabir Abdus Samee Sumit**  
Falun, Sweden

## Patience

From time immemorial patience has always been a virtue. Courage and confidence being the other cherished ones. Patience or 'Sabr' solved lots of problems, showed

## A point to ponder

By any definition 'Haji' is a respected word. Any Muslim or non-Muslim reveres a 'Haji'. Our mental picture of a 'Haji' is a pious and venerable person who has performed the duties towards his family and friends. He is free from any debt, given his/her sons or daughter into marriage etc. Hajj remains the fifth 'obligation' of a Muslim who is required to perform it if he/she fulfills certain honest conditions, as used to be practised by the older generation of people. Now, behold the Hajjis the country is churning out- there are Hajjis in the political arena who have very low standing in the public eye. What a pious lot! Many listed smugglers, gun-runners, drug smugglers, criminals and people with dubious police records have traveled to Mecca and Medina, and added the prefix, as if it is a 'degree'.

The press and the people can at least refrain from adding 'Haji' before the name of any person with a police record. That will stop glorifying them and also uphold the sanctity of the word 'Haji'.

**SNM**  
Dhaka

## Posters ruining beauty

Posters of different products, movies and others are destroying the beauty of Dhaka city. Wherever you go, on the sidewalk, under the Mohakhali Flyover, on the walls - you will see posters of different kinds. When these posters are removed, they leave indelible marks on the walls.

Many other citizens would surely feel the way I do. The total beauty goes away when you see different types of colourful and small plants on the road dividers and underneath you spot the awful posters.

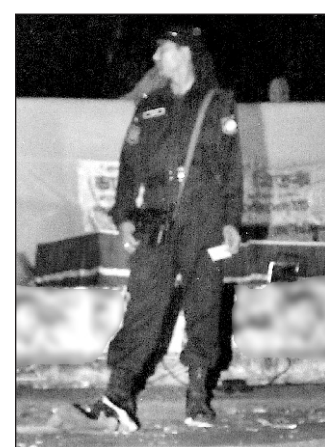
**Ali Asgher**  
Purana Paltan

## Rein them in

We were very much appalled at the dismal news that 21 Bangladeshis died of starvation and suffocation in the Mediterranean while they were going to Spain illegally. These unfortunate frivolous persons were the victims of the monkey business of some dishonest manpower recruiting agents. These manipulative

Many letters have been published in your daily about Rab. I am supporting a small portion of those letters. Cause I am opposing the activities of Rab. I want them to stop crossfire. The problem is that you are blaming the criminals for not getting justice from the present system. But criminals are not the problem, the problem is our society, our judicial system, our political system, our governance. Every time any of my relatives or I myself become the victim of any crime, I don't blame the criminal, because it is not unnatural of a man to become criminal. Rather it is the duty and responsibility of the society to take care of its citizens. I am not concerned about what World Bank or IMF is saying about us. I am only concerned about our future generation. What are we doing for them? We are creating a savage social system for the future generation. They will learn that it is normal to kill criminals without justice. Because justice is not a very important thing if you have power. It is not a crime to take bribe. It is not a crime to tell a lie. It is not a crime to steal. Nothing is crime if you have power. Every time Rab kills a high-profile criminal, we lose the trail of a high-profile godfather!

**Hasan, DU**



I appreciate the effort taken by the Liberation War Sector Commanders but from my perspective, all of them should be honoured starting with the most senior. Col. (Retd.) Osmani was the highest ranking officer from the East Bengal Regiment who came out of retirement to take the role as the figure head leader of the Mukti Bahini. Lt. Col. (Retd.) M. Abdur Rab was the second in command. The most noticeable omissions are the three Force Commanders, Lt. Col. K. M. Saifullah (S Force), Lt. Col. Ziaur Rahman (Z Force) and Lt. Col. Khalid Musharaff (K Force). Why have they been omitted?

It's a shame that petty politics blurs our visions. It means that those that served the country will probably not be given due honour

roads and flyovers within the cities and widening the exiting ones. But how can that be a long-term solution, given the population will go up anyway?

My point is that we are not doing the rudiment for solving the problem. And I am suggesting walking for short distance travels instead of using private vehicles and using bus as much as possible. It might sound impracticable, but from the millionaire to the lower class families of the developed countries, they are doing it for their short distance travels. Last December, I was going to an NGO office Mohakhali. I used to live in New DOHS. The distance would have been only 5 minutes if I would have just crossed the road and took a rickshaw. I took my car instead. And I reached there after 45 minutes. The reason was, of course, traffic jam. On my way back home I had my foreigner friend with me and we were in rush. So we started walking asking my driver to get back later to avoid the jam. It took only 15 minutes to reach home. When we reached home my friend lampooned at me for being lavish by using the car to get there. Many of us are showing lavishness by using privet vehicles, when walking can do things. The story does not end here. To make the situation worse, most of us maintaining more than one vehicle for no good reasons (Out of 25 families, that I know of in Dhaka, 18 own more than one vehicle).

It has been proved that making new roads and flyovers, pulling out rickshaws from major roads, and widening the existing roads can do little good to the traffic problem. At the same time only walking won't do any good if the government does not take some positive actions. Some of those actions can be: making parking structures/lots, pulling out makeshift vendors from footpaths, restructuring the bus route and increasing the total number of buses, imposing higher tax on private vehicles, making insurance mandatory, and imposing tolls on one or two major roads of the city (on private vehicles only). Important to notice that all these actions require only modern planning with little investment. And the planning begins with 'walking'. It won't cost us a penny if we give it a try.

**Syed Karim, Chittagong**

**Troubles of students of NU**  
I am writing this in support of the letter of Md Aminul Islam. You mentioned the core problems of all students like us. So you deserve our thanks. We the students of National University, specially the students of English, are writing in a quagmire of bitter uncertainty. We already appeared in second year exams without being informed well about "Advance reading and writing skills", therefore we are afraid of the results. Now in third year we have another "English language study", but we are not still provided with question patterns. It is also mention worthy that we have been given Bengali literature but no question patterns have been delivered yet. We are uninformed about question patterns of it whether it is like the questions of our poetry or drama or something else. The authorities should be aware of our problems and do the needful to solve them.

**Md.Forkan uddin**  
Chittagong City College

# Our leaders



*There is nothing good to say about our leaders. They don't read, they don't study, they have no vision, and they don't care about the well being of our people. In short, their character and behaviour do not fit into any civilised scheme of living. Any argument for or against them is unproductive, wastage of valuable time. But ridiculing them is perfect, that makes us (the common people) laugh and laughter is good for our heart.*

*I enjoy the thoughtful comments of your readers. I hope you'll encourage the readers to be bold, thoughtful and imaginative in their writings. I only have contempt for most of the "intellectuals" and "leaders" of Bangladesh.*

**Sherif Saeed**  
NJ, USA

depends on their success in business and good public relations. Bangladesh is a small country and it has nothing of substance to boast about as compared to other countries.

I believe the only way we could

ways and means for solutions, pacified people.

In these days of tense and stressful life we need to 'worship' patience. We get bogged down in traffic jam, sweat in the high noon, hear mind blowing bull horns, confront unruly rickshaws, buses and trucks, get obstructed by traffic police/sergeant, are forced to listen to useless, pointless speeches of lot many politicians and power brokers, get stuck in 'hartals', witness brutal mindless political and non-political killings etc. All these occasions build up stress. Yet, to save ourselves from annihilation we require sound reasoning so that we do not harm ourselves, our family, friends and community. Interestingly 'hartal' called by any party is manifestation of impatience. On the contrary peaceful protest, as organised by the family of the late SAMS Kibria, and human chains etc are patient and more effective means of political activities and protest.

As impatience is synonymous with destruction, all of us need to exercise patience, and at the same time look for options and solutions.

**Syed Nasrullah**  
Dhaka

manpower agents swindled them. Due to rampant unemployment and poverty the manpower businessmen can cheat many folksy youths. To satisfy their financial gluttony they pauperise these innocent guys in the name of better jobs. There are many unlicensed manpower agents that perpetuate the malpractice by the mercy of some unscrupulous high-ups in the government. The government should take stern action against these illegal manpower agents. They should generate employment opportunities for the unemployed youths of the country. They should take steps to export manpower through proper channel. For this the concerned ministries should work in tandem.

If the government wants to uphold the image of the country across the globe, they should crack down on the mushrooming business of the illegal manpower agents. I hope the government will address the matter seriously.

**Molla Mohammad Shaheen**  
Dept of English, DU

## Road naming

because of personal grudge.

**Abdul M. Ismail**  
Liverpool, England

## Let's try it

Traffic congestion is not a new problem for us. In fact, it used to be the major problem for each and every mega city of the developed countries. As a least developed country with huge population, we are facing the problem for decades. Then what should be done to get rid of this issue? Many suggestions have been made over the years. Some are trite as well as non-effective, some are quixotic, and some are too expensive to implement. Yet some are feasible and may turn out to be a long-term solution. Major cities like New York, Tokyo, and Chicago are very populated. And it is interesting to know that the populations of these cities are increasing at a rate of 4-6% each year.

Does it mean that the inner-city roads of these cities are getting wider gradually? The answer is no. On top of that, vehicles used in these cities are wider and bigger. Then what is the secret? Some people have asked for banning the non-motorised vehicles from major roads, but that turned out as a non-effective solution. The government is building new

# Passenger-shed and city bus service

In the recent days city bus service has improved significantly. People are now habituated to stay in the queue even for a long time. In fact, bus service for different destinations are available from all the corners of the city. Especially in the Uttara-Motijheel route there are lots of buses. The introduction of Volvo bus and some air-conditioned buses in this route facilitates convenient travelling to a great extent. It has reduced the use of private cars and cabs as well. It is a success of the present government.

At present, private companies are managing this service effectively and are making profit.



They have deployed lot of people in this service for ticket selling, checking and monitoring. But, nobody is building passenger-shed at the stoppages. Initially the government built some sheds in some specific roads and that are presently not being used due to relocation of stoppages. In this summer and rainy season, it becomes essential part of the service to protect passengers from direct sunlight or rain and storms.

We hope the authorities will look into the matter seriously.  
**Zahir U. Hyder, Dhaka**