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# Climate change and mangrove forests



Climate change is one of the most critical global environmental changes that the world is facing. It is widely accepted that global mean surface temperature has risen by around 0.5°C over the last century. Similarly, measurable increases in greenhouse gas concentration have occurred over the same period, and recent evaluations of global sea level changes suggest that the current average rate of rise is approximately 1.5 mm per year.

The principal natural threat to mangrove ecosystems comes from sea level rise and associated changes in sediment dynamics and salinity that will inundate the mangroves and erode their

substratum. Climate change may also cause potential problems through changes in rainfall pattern, increased frequency of storms, altered CO2 levels and possibly the impact of ultra-violet radiation. In a broad geographical scale, climate change will affect mangroves principally through increasing temperature. Temperature changes will tend to shift mangroves to higher latitudes. If sea level rise exceeds sedimentation; mangroves will face problems such as erosion. This will reduce the extent of mangroves by undercutting their roots through sheet erosion across the swamp surface and creek banks. 'A possible 45

centimetres (18 inches) rise in the sea level by the year 2050 may inundate 75 percent of the Sundarbans', warned the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Mangrove forests are an important component of the global carbon cycle. They both influence or are influenced by climate change and their management or destruction will have a significant role on the course of global warming in the twenty-first century. So, a sustainable mangrove forest management initiative should be taken immediately.

**Mirza F. Imam**  
Asst. Conservator of Forests  
Forest School, Chittagong



## Democracy in India

There are many types of democracies being practised in contemporary world and one need not ape the other. But there is always some radical element in a democracy which can prove to be a panacea for quite a number of problems. In this context, the fundamental difference between democracies of the USA and India needs highlighting.

During the on-going primaries of presidential election of the USA, the party candidates for presidency are being elected by party members in these elections (conducted under State authorities), which make all the difference in a democracy.

On the contrary, party office bearers and party candidates in Parliamentary and Legislative Assembly elections in India are appointed and chosen so arbitrarily that it is no surprise that:

(1) In India, the members of political party permanently complain about party office bearers arbitrarily foisted on them.  
[To quote only one example, the case of Shiv Sena is quite educative in this respect. Shiv Sena has sizable membership in the provinces of India also other than Maharashtra and its candidates contest Parliamentary and Legislative Assembly elections too over there. But the Shiv Sainiks from the rest of India do not have any right or voice (as to who will be the office bearers of Shiv Sena and who will be the Shiv Sena candidates in elections) for the simple reason that there are no organisational elections in Shiv Sena.]

(2) During every election, the Indian people and media complain that sizeable numbers of candidates of various political parties are accused of serious crimes which is a sign of criminalisation of Indian politics.

(3) Political parties still do not file annual returns of their audited financial accounts. This despite the order dated April 4, 1996 in S.C. case No. 24 of 1995 where the Supreme Court of India ordered Income Tax authorities to ensure these returns, which otherwise also is mandatory duty of I.T. Dept.  
(To what extent this financial anarchy of political parties has criminalised Indian politics is known to anyone who knows India.)

This political farce in India can easily be ended forever if organisational elections of registered political parties are conducted under State authorities, so that party members can elect office bearers of the party who will have legitimacy.

Otherwise, the present ridiculous situation will persist where apart from other glaring injustices and anarchy:-

- i) Dalits (oppressed castes) & other weaker sections of society are still treated inhumanely in villages and other parts of India.
- ii) National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme, the only hope and future of India (which is going to sustain about half of India's poor population) is almost non-existent at implementation level.

Therefore, if India wants to survive as the largest functioning democracy and that too in this part of Asia, then without any further delay it should adopt the 'State authority controlled party election system'

**Hem Raj Jain**  
New Delhi, India

## Great gesture!

The Tk. 1,000 crore (US\$145m) individual and anonymous donation through Islamic Development Bank to Sidr victims of Bangladesh is most astonishing and appreciable.

May the Almighty give him the best return!  
**Saif Tinku**  
One-mail

## Teachers' sufferings

Non-government teachers after retirement from regular service are now entitled to get some financial benefit according to the length of effective service rendered by them. And to look after this job a Board called Non-Govt. Teachers Retirement Benefit Board (NGTRB Board) headed by the Secretary, Ministry of Education, is working since introduction of this arrangement. The office to entertain applications from the incumbent teachers is now housed at BANBEIS Bhaban, 1, Sonargaon Road, Palassy, Nikhet, Dhaka.

This office is so heavily overloaded with work that it is not possible to discharge services to the retired teachers smoothly and satisfactorily. One Deputy Director entrusted with the job has to deal with several hundreds of applications. Every day there is rush of teachers to file petitions. The disposal of cases is very slow due to paucity of manpower. The jurisdiction of the office, the whole of Bangladesh, is unmanageably large and it is hard to satisfy the needs of the teachers with this small manpower. A sense of dissatisfaction and frustration is observed among the teachers who are compelled to come to this office from far-flung areas. People from Teknaf to Tentulia have to come to this office even for collecting the format of applications. Many teachers allege that their petitions have been pending since long. One can easily observe the situation by going to the office. The rush of teachers is so heavy that the officials do not find any scope to give a patient hearing to anybody's problem. They feel rather disgusted at the onrush of teachers. Poor & innocent old teachers who deserve sympathy and cooperation from the officials are often found to tolerate obnoxious treatment from them. I would therefore like to offer the following suggestions for kind consideration of the Ministry of Education in greater public interest and to remove the sufferings of the retired non-govt. teachers.

1) Establish offices at all district headquarters and put the District Education Officers in charge of processing all the applications of his district.

2) Consider the office at BANBEIS as its head office and function of this office shall be to accord final approval of the cases sent by the DEOs.

3) Depute officers at headquarters division-wise. As such, as many as six deputy directors may be posted for the divisions- Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal & Sylhet.

4) Spare the teachers from coming to the head office for solving petty problems which can be met at the DEO level.

5) The Board headed by the Secretary Ministry of Education (NGTRB Board) should comprise of teachers who have no direct affiliation to any political party. Upright, honest and non-political members are expected to do justice to the innocent teachers.

6) Reconstitute the NGTRB Board as early as possible when its term is over, so that the works do not pile up to cause great sufferings to the poor teachers.

It is hoped that these suggestions, if executed, shall do some good to reduce the sufferings of the teachers who have dedicated their valuable lives towards building a society worth living.

**Prof. M. Sadeq**  
Chairman  
Department of Management  
Tejgaon College, Dhaka

## Private University students

We, private university students, are accused of buying certificate. For

that reason many of the private university students are being deprived. Whenever they go to face any interview, they have to face trouble. Even the government is not aware of this matter, though private universities are accommodating large numbers of students.

What about the public university students who are getting question papers before their exams?

**Tarik**  
Leading University, Sylhet

## When will it stop?

Will we, as a nation, ever be able to get out of this curse of running a pervasive Kangaroo government systems- be it justice, business or education? Just as the beauty is in the eyes of the beholders, it appears that the rule of law is too in the desires of business and political groups- depending on the day's need.

In our current Kangaroo systems, we see that the iron fist of law applies only to the common people or to the selective politicians who incur wrath of the rulers.

It seems that all those big words by this current CTG about changing the old corrupt and illegal ways of running government and businesses are actually not holding water. We see that there are one set of special 'truth commission' laws for business corrupts, one 'pro-reform' set for breakaway politicians, another 'All you can pardon' set of laws for the RU teachers and another 'Set free, guilty or not' set of laws for DU teachers. Where will it stop?

**Tanvir Nowaz**  
Boston, MA

## PSC quota

I am writing about the reform proposals of the PSC that have been sent to the establishment ministry for review without any kind of recommendation for cancelling the quota system. It has disappointed us as well as questioned the government's initiative to bring changes for the better in this sector. It is undeniable that without honest, meritorious and competent officers in the administration you cannot ensure good governance and upgrade the prevailing service system.

It is not only alleged but is proved that the quota system gives less qualified candidates a chance to get access to the country's top level jobs.

**Anis Rahman**  
Zahurul Haq Hall  
University of Dhaka

## 28th BCS

More than two and a half years have already passed, no BCS circulation has been given! The new boss of the PSC, a former cabinet secretary and veteran bureaucrat, assured the job seekers of holding a fair BCS exams after necessary reformation of the PSC. But PSC has been reformed in some areas, excluding the quota system. No step has been taken against this illogical system. The PSC is going very slow. No headway is seen. The job seekers are eagerly waiting for the BCS exams. But PSC is silent in this regard. So, the young generation is depressed and it is not unlikely that a large portion of this segment will suffer from moral degradation.

It seems now that everything under this emergency govt. is uncertain. I hope the PSC will take the issue seriously.  
**Mahub Sheikh**  
Shahidullah Hall  
University of Dhaka

## Price of rice

The business community and the down-to-earth experts (having not

so high degrees in economics) warned the present caretaker government time and again about the impending food shortage, possible rise in price in the international market and appealed for quick action. The importers wary of 'wholesale anti-corruption' and anti-hoarding operations were not much eager to import rice in large quantity. The TCB was sidelined and the BDR was entrusted with the job of import of rice and the result was inevitable.

One does not have to be a rocket scientist to understand that the economy is not in the fast lane anymore. With ever declining foreign investment, less employment opportunity, mistrust among business community who knows what lies ahead.

I guess the writer should go through his own article ("Price of rice: Is the government responsible?", Thursday, January 24, 2008) and try to explain what he tried to say. And also needs to watch his language ('rice-addicted citizens', 'the economy being raped for 36 years by politicians' etc).

The writer tried to discuss some economics-related issues and lost track, and then started the unmistakable tirade- came down heavily on political leaders using harsh language, blaming them as the originators of the current inflation, and also for dismal economic state in their times (a layman with some common sense can swear which was apparently a lot better than now) without elaborating with facts and data.

**Saif**  
Dhaka

## Dhaka roads

Now that the winter is here, I wonder why the condition of the Dhaka roads (not to speak of the rest of the country) is so horrible. There hardly has been any rain during the last few months and yet we have not seen any activities to repair those roads. I am sure that once the rainy season starts, there will be activities for the "poor" roads, which in fact will be in June, when the scope of the present budget will come to an end and, as such, there won't be much scrutiny (at least that is what the people concerned think). However, in the present context, things are different. I hope no one gives Sidr as an excuse which seems to be the norm!

I would urge the authorities to take appropriate action, including action against those who have not yet "processed" the required papers/notes.  
**Jamilul Huq (Dipu)**  
Lalmatia  
Dhaka

## Prospect of e-governance

Everywhere in the world, especially in Asia, Africa and South America, governments are using the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in enhancing sustainable development. Bangladesh that lags far behind in this regard needs to put the ICTs at the heart of all of its advancement programmes and strategies. These technologies can also expedite the country's progress in economic, social and political spheres. The traditional methods of growth and development will be replaced by the latest technology-based ways of development. And one development is e-governance, if we talk about the Electronic Governance (e-governance) of any country, then at first we must know about the appropriate definition or concept of Electronic Governance (e-governance). The term e-governance can be defined as efficient and effective use of modern ICT technology with a

view to establishing good governance. From the management and technological perceptions, the e-governance can also be defined as Electronic State Management System based on information and communication technologies (ICT), including the Internet technology, CRM sectors, TCP/IP protocol and various kinds of attributes. The ultimate objective of e-governance is to establish good governance. The attributes of good governance can be identified as follows: a. Honesty b. Efficiency and Effectiveness (in terms of time, space and money) c. Justice d. Reliability e. Participatory Democracy f. Accountability g. Accessibility and Transparency h. Equity i. Vision in decision making. Many countries of the world are now using the e-governance, and are benefited very much. Now Bangladesh is going ahead of other developing countries of the world. And I think if the Bangladesh government implements the e-governance then it will help the country in real terms.

By using the e-governance our government can manage the whole state management system electronically and ensure the proper distribution of service to the general people.  
**Md. Shahriar Parvez (BBA, MBA)**  
Banani, Dhaka

## Bhutto and Bangladesh

When the whole world is shocked about the way B. Bhutto has been assassinated on the soil of Pakistan, here in Bangladesh some of us tend to have a different view.

We as Muslims have the firm conviction that no one can escape the justice of Allah and go unpunished from this world. Her late father Z.A. Bhutto who masterminded the genocide in the then East Pakistan one of the worst in human memory and history, bluffed the founder of our nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in those days on the pretext of finding out an amicable solution of the political stalemate, but only to buy time to prepare for the genocide by transferring East Pakistani soldiers to W. Pakistan and bringing in W. Pakistani soldiers to East Pakistan along with huge quantity of arms and ammunition as per the blue print.

Because of him Pakistan was

dead on 25 March, 1971. Being a politician with all that education how could he mastermind such heinous and brutal actions on the fellow citizens of the same country? His conscience never pricked him. How could he be a party to such inhuman crimes leading to the destruction of his own country? The barbarism of the Pak army on the unarmed civilians surpassed all the past records.

Even after the creation of Bangladesh he was never repentant and never sought forgiveness from the people of Bangladesh. So a day came when he had to pay the ultimate price in such a despicable manner. His daughter and two sons never apologised to the people of Bangladesh for their late father's unforgivable crime. The Pakistanis have now started killing their own soldiers.

So no one can bypass the justice of the Almighty. May be this is the fallout of the curse they earned from the innocent people of Bangladesh who bore the brunt of their brutality.  
**M.A. Elihan Zakaria**  
Staines, Stanwell  
Middlesex, UK

## The subcontinent issue

Mr. Elahi is ill informed. Indian subcontinent has a much hoarier tradition of democracy. Alexander got toughest resistance from Katha, Youdheya and Malla republics. These were never headed by a king but were republics and elected representatives to run the government. They never surrendered nor capitulated like Porus, who despite all accolades heaped upon him, became a vassal of Alexander. Vajji Sangha of Lichhavis, two thousand five hundred years back, on Northern bank of the Ganges in modern day Bihar state of India was one of the most powerful republics of Indian subcontinent and was antithesis to the so called grand kingdom of Magadh. Like all republics, ancient and present, it fell to internal dissensions. Democracy is ingrained in the subcontinent in the form of Panchayats in all villages, which is a truly direct participatory democratic institution. No king or potentate created it. It came out of the genius of the people of the subcontinent. More importantly,

# CA's speech

The Chief Adviser's nationwide address on 12 January over radio and TV stating his government's past, present and future activities was very promising and pragmatic, while the whole nation is waiting to go ahead with the general election soon after the completion of basic reforms to hold a fair, free and credible election following the roadmap presented by the Election Commission.

The speech was reassuring in order to develop a congenial political environment aiming to hold election within the set time-frame and should be helpful in solving whatever problems are still there.

The task of holding a credible general election acceptable to all participating parties is a very challenging and tough one and that needs a very efficient and effective administrative set-up across the country.

The Chief Adviser has given very clear directives and plans on how his government has been working relentlessly in this field, taking into consideration all those aspects which possibly could impede holding of the election.

Lifting of the Emergency would gradually open the path for the common people to come forward with their views, ideas that will certainly facilitate the government to lead the country to attain the desired goals in line with establishing democracy and the rule of law.

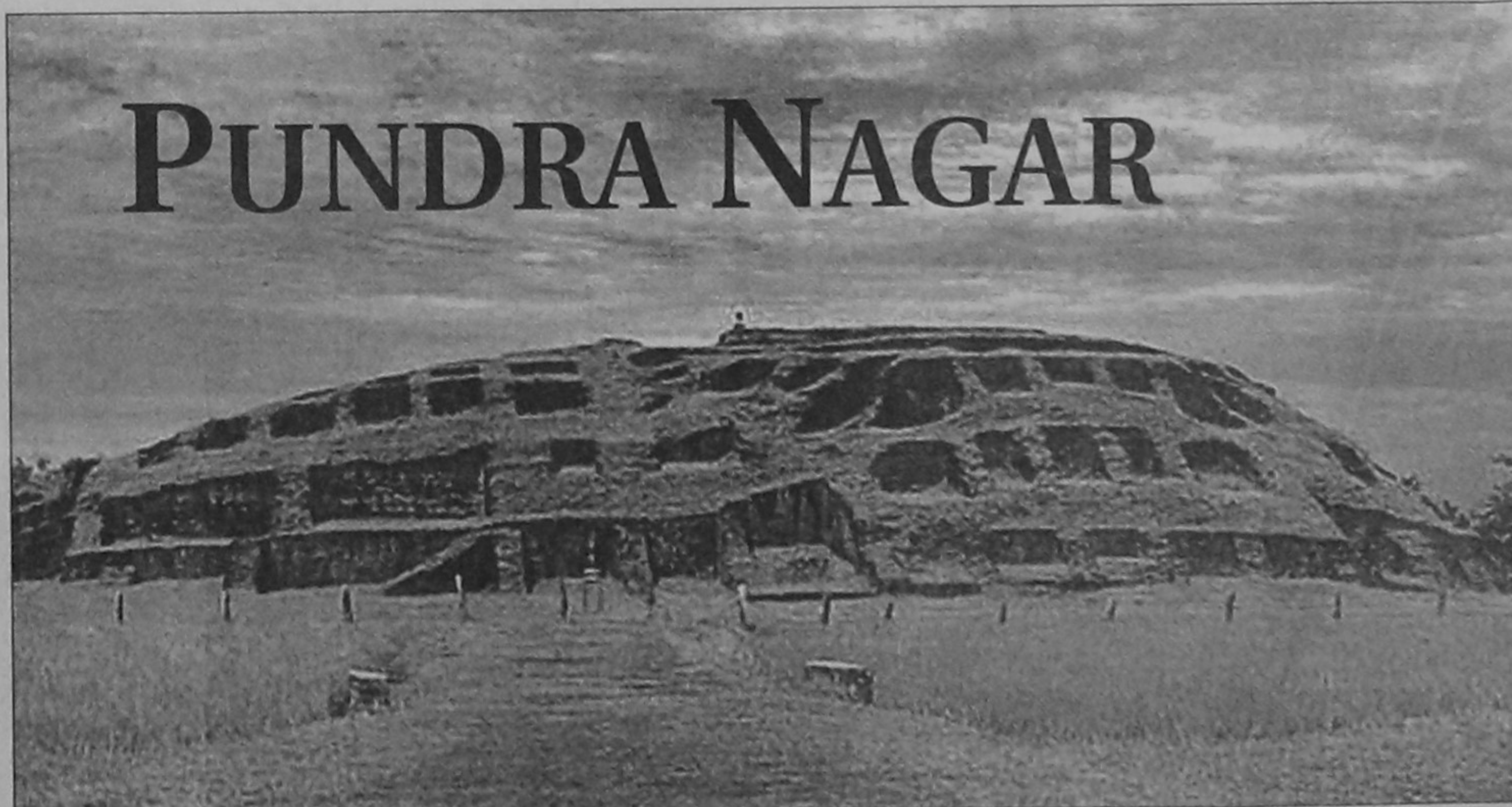
**Nasar**  
One-mail

it works. No one in the subcontinent needs proof that democracy is the best system for larger good of the majority. The tragedy is that this remains unfulfilled due to the majority being bewitched by inaction. Coming to Kleptocracy, in the absence of a widely awakened public kleptocracy cannot be avoided. Take the example of India, for the last 17 years it is not ruled by a dynasty, at least in majority of the states of India. But Kleptocracy rules. It is neutral to political shades, sex, religion and leftist or rightists. Antidote to Kleptocracy is democracy where people have the right to speak and to be judged by an incorruptible Judiciary. It is not to be in the subcontinent, because the good people decide to sit at home and kleptocrats rule the roost. As an amusing aside, a Mughal emperor took bribe from the East India Company to give trading rights in Bengal!

The problem with emigrants, everywhere from the third world to the first world, is to decry the home country. Mr. Elahi may identify it with dynasty. But what about Factors of East India company who ruined Bengal by acting as surrogates of Indian traders and stole all customs duty payable to Bengal's Nawab. What about Halliburton and Dick Cheney, or Margaret Thatcher's son and Saudi Arabian contracts? Rule of law and an unstoppable and unrelenting public outcry against kleptocrats is the only redemption for citizens of any country, whether in the subcontinent or in the west.

As an uninterested outsider, I must register that it is not good to be an ingrate. Any denigration of Sher-e-Bangla, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib's and General Ziaur Rahman's families, till appropriate legal processes are over, in my view reflect an ingratitude to those who sacrificed their today, so that Bengal may live with honour and dignity.

In a democracy, the first requirement is respect for the judicial process, and do not prejudice a person without a fair trial!  
**Rajendra Asthana**  
Mumbai, India



Pundra Nagar, an ancient site of 2,000 years back located at Bogra, is a well known ancient heritage of Bengal. This is going to be finished in the hands of local looters. Pundra Nagar has relics of the dynasties of Maurya, Shangu, Gupta, Pal and Sen.

The culprits looting the relics must be brought to justice immediately. We appeal to the government to take all initiatives so that Pundra Nagar is listed as a world heritage of Bangladesh as soon as possible.

**Kumar Prithwiraj Nath**  
Toronto, Canada