

Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

Traffic system

This time I am writing about the traffic problem in our country. I appeal to the CTG to give special attention to it as the traffic situation is going from bad to worse.

The vehicles seen on the road on the Akhri Munajat day is twice a day affair in some of the major big cities in Europe and USA. The density of vehicles on the roads is nothing compared to some of the cities in South East Asia. Productivity and quality of life are greatly hampered by traffic congestion. Loss of time for commuters, industrial and commercial productivity,

poor quality of life for residents of Dhaka and Chittagong, poor impression to foreign visitors lead to lower foreign investment and commuters are subject to more exhaust fumes leading to respiratory diseases.

There is no speed limit, especially on the inter city roads. Complete disregard for rules and law is common on the part of drivers and all concerned.

In other countries, when you flash your light, it means, "I am stopping, you can come", but here, when you flash your light, it is "You stop, I am com-

ing". No one seems to know the right of way.

For an immediate solution, I suggest that the govt. declare a speed limit, not more than 50kph on the major highways and 40 kph in the major city roads, otherwise 30kph on all other roads. No overtaking on highways until there are overtaking lanes. The government may start making overtaking lanes on highways and till then no overtaking should be allowed. No stopping on roads, vehicles must stop off the road.

What environmental hazard will be created by the bridge is not clear. Some organisations are opposing the bridge construction at the behest of the rich inhabitants of the Gulshan Lake side to stop plying of rickshaws in their posh area without any concern for the general public who face considerable difficulty moving across. I am over 70 years old and I cannot even go to Gulshan from Banani as I cannot walk such a distance. If necessary, the common people of Banani and Gulshan should be consulted about the merits of the proposed bridge.

We feel the govt. is doing the right thing and, as such, the construction of the bridge should not be delayed.

Anwar Ahmed
Banani, Dhaka

Bridge over Gulshan Lake

Presently, people wanting to go to Gulshan from Banani and vice versa, have to walk all the way unless they are rich enough to own a motor vehicle as no rickshaws are allowed to ply the Kamal Ataturk Av. For the distance, no CNG baby taxi is available and buses have to be taken from a very distant point. The proposed bridge will permit plying of rickshaws across and will facilitate walking conveniently. A few more such bridges will be a welcome relief.

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Taxing the horn

This is in reference to a letter appearing in your daily on the 22nd of February 2008 written by Mr. Gary F Collins. He has advised a credit system in vehicles in Dhaka which, when exhausted, would prevent the driver from using the horn any further.

This is a unique suggestion in fact, too unique in the context of Bangladesh, and Dhaka in particular. I believe it is a 'band-aid' solution to a problem far more serious than he would like to think.

Though innovative, Mr. Collins' suggestion would not work for two reasons:

(1) To begin with, the device users would need to resist their urge for 'device-tampering' something that has been witnessed far too often in the past. To supervise the prevention of this 'device-tampering' we would probably need a force of supervisors (at the taxpayer's expense). And what is there to say that these supervisors, in turn, would not need to be supervised themselves, so they do not succumb to greed? This list can go on and on, taking us deeper and deeper into the abyss of corruption.

(2) More importantly though, the traffic system in Dhaka would need to be properly re-organised and streamlined. Though monumental, it is not impossible (as has been achieved in Bangkok and Kolkata). This would preclude the need for blowing any horn at all.

Dr. CZaman
Canada

Our language

English is a prominent language and definitely a legacy of the British rule. 21st February seems to be the only day when we decry the influence of any foreign language on our lives. Are we really losing our mother tongue?

I can appreciate the uproar, but I fail to understand the association. English is and can only be a foreign language.

The International Mother Language Day is our legacy, and let us not forget it.

Sazzad Hossain
Gulshan-2, Dhaka

Fuel & power options

Your business report on the subject (Feb 20) stated that Prof. Tamim identified nuclear power, gas supply from Myanmar and power import from India, as logical possibilities to meet the power and fuel requirements of Bangladesh.

One wonders why he did not mention and identify the maximum utilisation of our coal resources as the most available option? Was he trying to avoid annoying the "intellectuals led" anti-mining group trying to prevent the use of our important resource and in the meanwhile stifle development of north-west Bangladesh? Logically, this should be of topmost priority for our government, which is the CTG today. They must take this up soon because "A bird in hand is worth two in the bush" which sums up our logical priority.

We should pragmatically go all out for the recovery and utilisation of our valuable coal, in whatever manner--be it deep shaft or open pit mining. This must go ahead; in spite of the "sound and fury" from our self proclaimed experts(?) on the technical subject. Our next resource in order of priority should be nuclear power; based on the total safety of the nuclear fuel and easy disposal of its waste for "Pebble Bed Nuclear Power plants. A number of these totally safe nuclear power plants are operating in South Africa and the design of this radical nuclear reactor is their invention. Unfortunately, it seems our "pundits" are not aware of it, although the information is just an Internet click away! Coupled with additional power and fuel source development; we MUST go all out for power conservation, not just power rationing (our non-technical approach), through using only fuel and power efficient equipment in the transport sector, industry and items of daily utility including even the simple and common mobile phone. There has been no study on the power requirement for this. However, just as a guess, though not wildly wrong, we may be consuming around 10 to 15 MWhr. power per day for charging all the mobile phones in use in Bangladesh. But do we know or seriously cared to know which brand and model of mobile phone consumes the least electricity for say 30 minutes of charging? This can be easily found out in any reasonable practical physics or electrical engineering facility in Bangladesh, of which many exist! That sums up our attitude regarding power shortage; "all talk and no action"! I am even willing to volunteer to work on this matter of mobile phones and common electrical utility items with any technical institution that wants to provide this important data, which can show us the route to power conservation.

We must not forget that every KW saved is the same as an additional KW produced! **S.A. Mansoor**
Retired engineer

Jewel Rana
MS Student
Dept of Biotechnology
Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh

Bird flu & "Goobre Shalik"

We live in Joar Shahara, Dhaka Cantonment. My residence has quite a number of trees where every day various birds namely, Bulbuli, Shalik, Tuntuni, Doyel, Kobutor etc flock together.

In the present bird flu condition the number of birds has fallen significantly except for Goobre Shalik. They still gather as before in good numbers here and there as if they are unaffected.

This could be a noticeable point for the researchers that Goobre Shaliks are not being affected by bird flu like other species. This information may be of some help to find antidotes against bird flu.

Faruq & Mohands
Dhaka

Star editorial

I could not disagree more with The Star's editorial, "There is but one 'brand' of democracy - Differences lie in the form of practicing it".

There are many flavours of democracy in the world. The flavours that Bangladesh has been practicing since its creation is not aligned with the socio-cultural background of Bangladesh for success. The result has been a regression in the pursuit of happiness. I believe General Moin alluded to the flavour that aligns with the socio cultural background Bangladesh.

British style or the US style democracy does not work in violence prone Bangladesh. Like it or not, that is the fact. Your paper ignored that fact. Unlike the western democracies, discredited politicians used their discredit as an asset in Bangladesh. How can anyone make traditional democracy work in Bangladesh in that violent culture?

I have to agree with the General's hypothesis of unique Bangladesh brand democracy.

Robin
Carmel, California
USA

Election and political parties

Mr. Shahnoor Wahid is my favourite writer and I always try to read his writings published in DS magazines and post-editorials. Although a bit sarcastic, his presentation is unique in painting true pictures of a person, a group or a class of people or professionals of our society. His latest write-up published in DS on 4th of March is an example. I put here as it was "Those veteran election-mongers have gotten their best three-piece and designer pajama-kurta (politician brand) washed and ironed to go to the Election Commission (EC).

They have sniffed the hint of election in the air, like those seasonal migratory birds that can sniff winter in the air and know where to go when."

He painted the true colour of our politicians. But one point is missing in his writings, their "desh prem"-patriotism. One group tries to stay in power at any cost to safeguard the sovereignty and image of the nation from the other group (the opposition), who are out to destroy them.

The losers will never accept the verdict of the people even if the election is free, fair and credible. They have already started speaking ill of others just to mislead people. Their supporters have already started raising their voices and saying "their leaders are fuler moto pabitra" and cases against them are politically motivated.

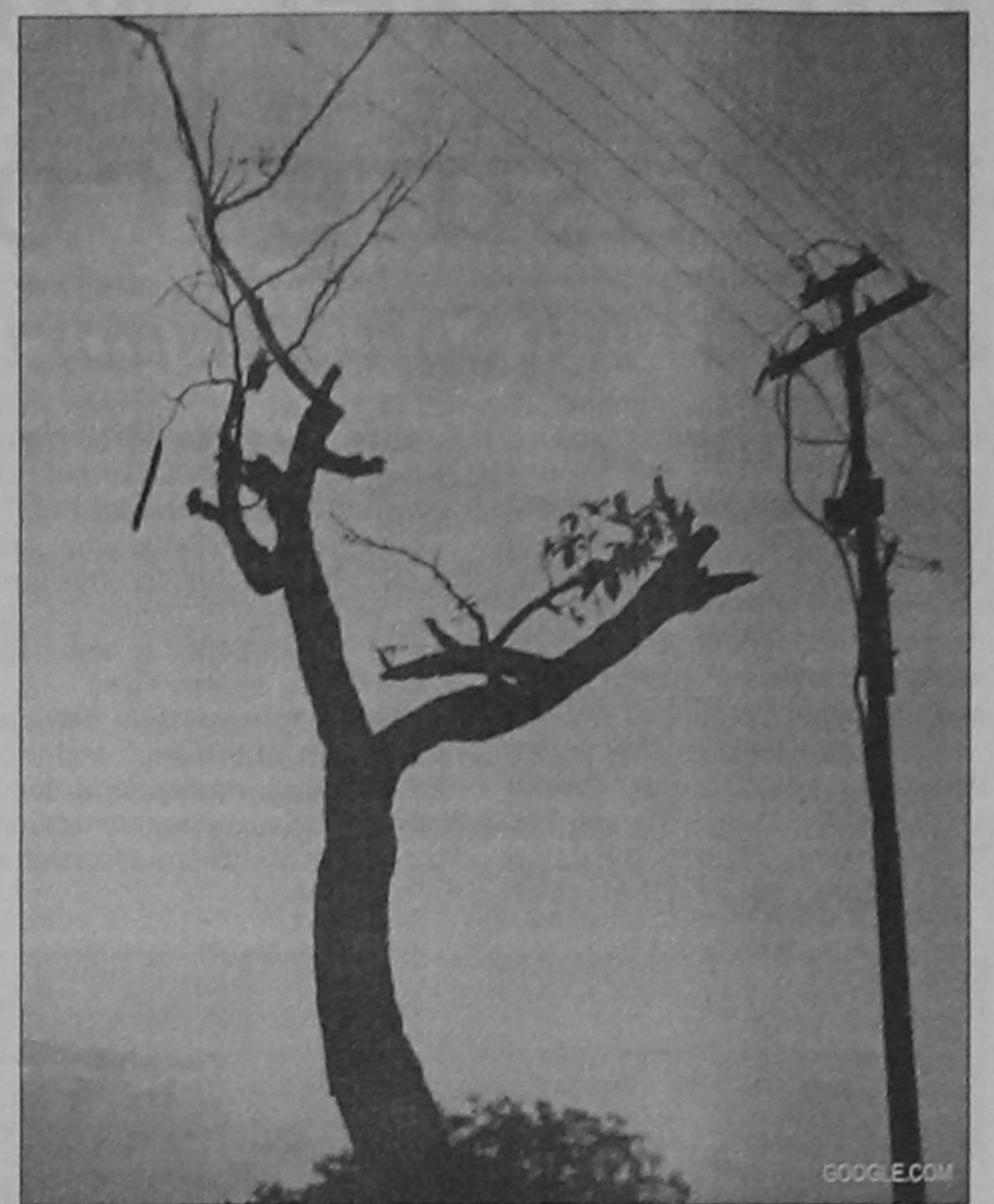
Shafiqul Islam
On e-mail

The writer

Humayun Ahmed is a popular writer and director. In fact, he is a highly gifted writer. The characters Himu and Misir Ali created by him are well known. These characters are so powerful that many youths have a great passion to be like them. Besides this, his films have also proved that he is the very best in that sector as well.

I'm looking forward to reading more of his books in the days ahead.

Jewel Rana
MS Student
Dept of Biotechnology
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Why can't we change?

The season of load-shedding is here again. Incessant hours of interruptions posing troubles at all ends, from daily chores to valuable manufacturing processes. We all know how it feels like to be in that situation. But even after that why don't we change? Why can't we sit for a single moment without the AC on? (Why do we need to keep it on in the first place when we need to put a blanket to avoid the chilling weather just after 10 minutes?)

- Why do we need to switch on ALL the lights, fans and everything in the room even if we are there for 1 or 2 minutes and then why do we forget to switch them off?

- Why do we always forget to switch off the lights, fans or AC even when there is not a single person in the room?

- Why can't we even walk two floors when we see an elevator?

Are these practices limited to power supply only. No, I must admit. We need a bucket of water to clean two dishes, we don't care to put off the tap properly, we don't want to spend 10 paisa each day on the match stick, so we keep burning gas. The examples are unlimited. Definitely, access to luxury is a benefit and a personal choice. No outsider is allowed to comment on that. But did we ever ask ourselves what would happen to our next generation who may have the cash in their account but without any access to the luxuries because there would be nothing out there that you can buy with that money.

The frustrated words are not to hurt personal feelings, but to ask for raised awareness so that we can all have a slightly better life and can leave a less difficult future for our next generations!

Joshua Joyonty, Uttara, Dhaka

Talk show

This morning we had the opportunity to listen to two good talk show programmes. The first one on ntv 'people's tel' programme, the second one on Channel i 'Sangbadpatra porjalochona'. I thank both moderators and the distinguished guests for their well articulated and professional presentation on the subject and related issues.

Thanks to the chairman of the BTRC for his well prepared presentation of the plan for development of the telecommunication sector. It seems that the organisation needs necessary financial and administrative freedom to achieve its planned goal which would contribute to economic growth and employment generation. Most importantly, the impact would go down to the rural sector which is the urgent need to reduce the big disparity between urban and rural development. In view of that we hope the govt. would take quick decisions to give full autonomy to the BTRC in running their affairs freely and with transparency.

The talk by the chairman of the BTRC reminds me of the popular face of Magistrate Rokon Uddaulah who became so popular for his anti-adulteration drive. I regret his emotional public utterances and suggest that he be re-empowered with his magistracy and given his popular job of anti-adulteration drive.

Regarding the second talk show on Channel i, I thank two reputed journalists for their well articulated presentation of the issues for the viewers to understand these critical matters in the proper perspective with necessary objectivity.

Areader
One-mail

Wastage of public money

I am trying to bring a serious issue to your attention.

Of late, the government of Bangladesh has made attempts to computerize the billing process of utility services (e.g. gas, electricity, telephone). This is a good attempt no doubt and successful implementation of the plan will bring lots of benefit to the clients including protection against systems loss. Although, some utility service providers have started this computerization process, nobody is concerned about the progress of these projects and therefore the allocated moneys wasted.

For example, through some personal interconnection with Bakhrabad Gas Systems Ltd., I have come to know that their computerization process started a long time ago and it has not been finished yet, though the deadline of the project has passed. I have come to know that one institute of BUET (namely ICT) is implementing the project for Bakhrabad Gas Systems Ltd. It made me curious, since BUET is no doubt the best technical institute in Bangladesh, how come they failed to meet the deadline, and still it went unnoticed. I made some personal investigation into this, and the facts that I found are even worse. This institute of BUET (i.e. ICT), is running several similar projects for other organisations also (Jalalabad Gas Systems Ltd, Titas Gas Pre-paid Meter Project, DESCO Production Unit etc) and they failed almost in every project to meet the deadline. Moreover, even being an institute of BUET, this institute does not have necessary skilled human resources to

run these projects. Still the incidents are not coming to light (probably because all the organisations involved in these projects are public organisations).

The government should investigate the matter immediately.

AB, One-mail

Job quota

To develop the country, we need a very efficient and talented civil service. They are the key players in the development process of a country. At the moment, 55% government jobs are filled up from quota and only 45% jobs are given to talented students. For this reason, we are not getting the best students in government jobs.

So we must get rid of the quota system and recruit talented students in the government services. Otherwise, we will not have an efficient civil service.

Mainul Sagar
One-mail

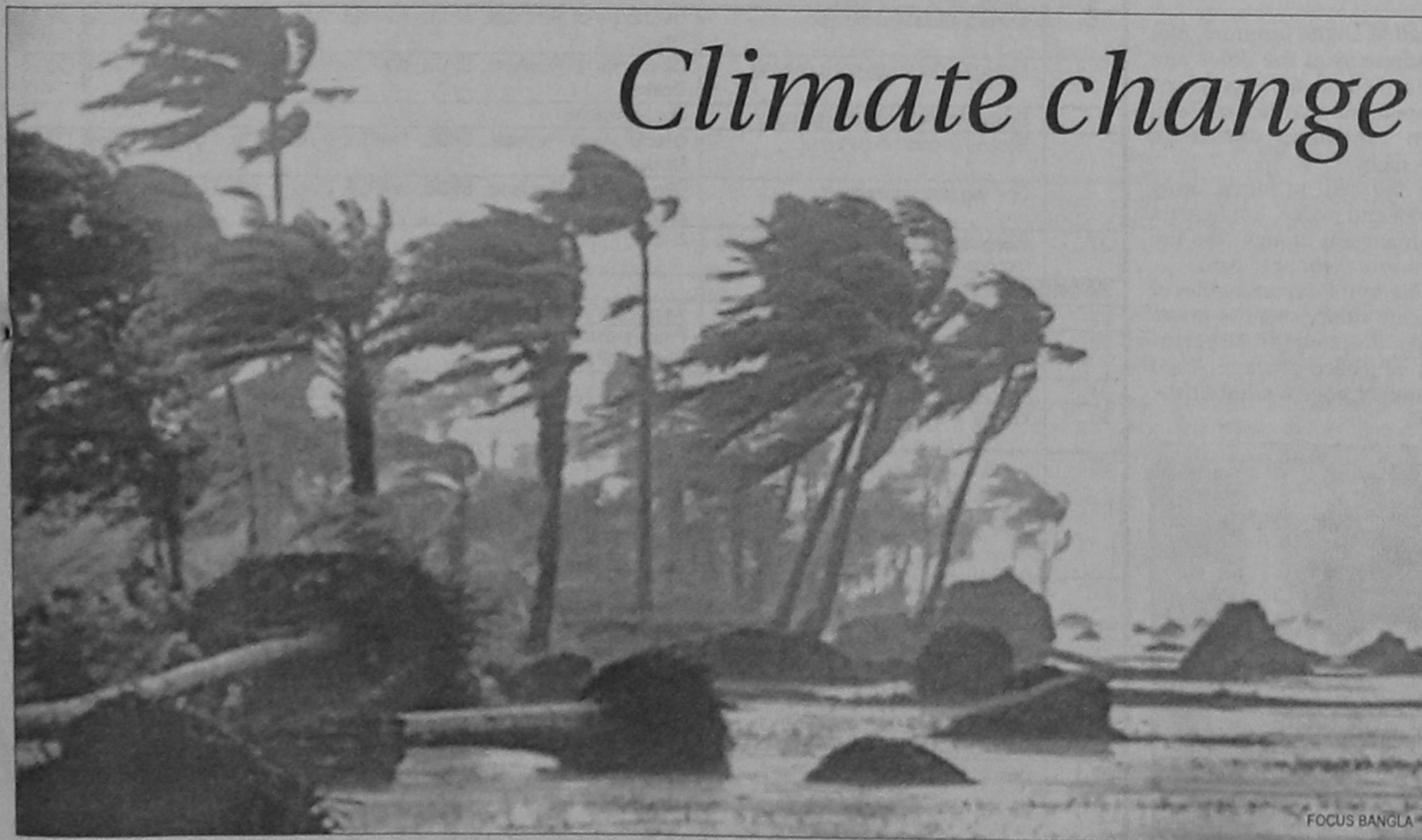
Anniversary issue

I am a regular reader of your paper since 1992, the year I came back from abroad to live here permanently. I have noticed that you bring out "Anniversary Special" issue every year. Naturally, it contains valuable writings on various issues of national and international importance in broad sheet. Don't you think it would be a good idea to have it printed in magazine or A4 size. It can then be preserved and re-read and kept in the family library.

Hope you will consider it for your next issue.

M Alam
Dhaka

Climate change



Warming up of earth and consequent climate change is a burning issue all over the globe and it is particularly so in

Bangladesh where the people living in the coast stretched over 700 km are under the threat of being inundated by sea level rise.

I would therefore request you to kindly publish reports so that interested people can satisfy their thirst for information

about climate trends in Bangladesh.
M.A. Matin
Retd. Director, BWDB
West Kafrul, Dhaka

FOCUS BANGLA