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Save environment



We do not think about the ill effects of detrimental toxic CO2 and CFC gas because we are not concerned about our environment. Actually, we are destroying our environment in many ways like producing CO2 and CFC gas from vehicles, air coolers, and not following the perfect waste management procedures. Apart from these, we are cutting down trees.

A country should have at least 25% forest areas of its total land mass, but our country has only 9% of it. Behind all the natural disasters and degradation of environment is the toxic CO2. Excessive felling of trees causes the degradation of underground water level as well as drought. As the CO2 gets higher the temperature goes high as well. Climatologists predict that if there is a 4 degree centigrade increase in temperature, then the sea water level will rise sharply.

We should prepare ourselves for such disasters in the near future.

Hasnat, AIUB

Khilkhet, Dhaka

Shrimp export and sea turtle conservation

I was attracted by the news item with the heading "Bangladeshi shrimp plants fully compliant" (Business Page; 19 April 2008). There is no doubt that the shrimp industry is the second largest foreign exchange earner of Bangladesh. This is one side of the story. This earning comes from what cost on the ecosystem and nature is another side of the story. I am going to highlight an issue related to the conservation of sea turtles and shrimp trade.

In 1987, the United States required all trawling shrimp boats to equip their fishing nets with turtle excluder devices (TED). As a follow-up two years after, the shrimp-turtle law was implemented. This required all countries that the USA was importing shrimp from to certify that the shrimp they shipped were harvested by boats equipped with TEDs. Countries that cannot guarantee the use of the escape devices were banned from exporting shrimp to the USA. Bangladesh was one of the countries banned from exporting shrimps to the USA.

The ban was however lifted with the explanation that the shrimps exported by Bangladesh to the USA are cultured in the hatcheries. That's right but the question remained whether the mother shrimps collected by the shrimp trawlers are using TEDs? The Ministry of Fisheries & Livestock (MOFL) however claims that TEDs are installed in some shrimp trawlers.

In Bangladesh the sea turtles are more threatened by the fishing nets namely *behundi* and *lakkha jals*. A lot of sea turtles die getting entangled in the fishing nets and shrimps caught in those nets are exported too. More than a thousand sea turtles were recorded dead from fishing nets last year. It may be noted that sea turtles are recognized as endangered worldwide and many countries including Bangladesh are working for its conservation. Moreover, Bangladesh is a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity and Convention on Migratory Species. Studies have shown that using TEDs can reduce sea turtle mortality by almost 50%. Most of the dead sea turtles are adult female sea turtles that come to nest on the beaches. Only one in thousand hatchlings survives till maturity and it takes almost 25-30 years for a sea turtle to reach adulthood.

In addition to lobbying for increasing shrimp export, the Bangladesh government should also keep an eye on compliance with the international conventions for the conservation of much depleted biological resources. S.M.A. Rashid, PhD
Baitul Aman Housing Society
Adabor, Mohammadpur

The new conversation

I congratulate Mr. Badrul Ahsan for focusing on the latest psyche of the corrupt politicians and their cronies (The DS, May 30, 2008). In military terminologies there is a popular term called Psychological Warfare or in brief psy-warfare. The psy-warfare is played during war

between two warring countries and its purpose is to create awareness through propaganda and other means among the people of the enemy country that whatever their government is doing is wrong and harmful for them and they should force the government to stop it - in other words submit to the dictates of the opposing party or surrender. History is replete with this and I need not elaborate further.

Now we find a new and bizarre form of psy-warfare going on in our country to motivate people to accept corruption as a way of life. A section of people is covertly asking for legalization of corruption. Of course it sounds weird, uncalled for and unfathomable, but it is what is going on. Mr. Ahsan has narrated it with full devotion and sincerity and I am sure every word he has written has pierced his heart creating pain and agony. Because, whatever he has written is bitter truth. Moreover, this type of pervasive school of thought, to look at corruption without discontentment, exists only in Bangladesh and nowhere else in the world.

So, all patriotic citizens of the country must, not only resist corruption, but fight for its complete elimination. In the words of the writer, "if you give corruption an inch, it takes a whole yard".
Brig Gen (Retd) Sarwar Hossain
Dhanmondi RA, Dhaka

Non-invasive coronary treatment

A very informative and revealing article which is figuratively the "cape of good hope" for those who are suffering from coronary diseases and diabetes was published in local English daily on June 17. Their numbers are increasing day by day in Bangladesh; possibly due to our more sedentary lifestyle, particularly in the cities of Bangladesh.

Unfortunately, most of us are not aware of the CAD-PR Centre at Shaheed Suhrawardy Hospital. It would be in the fitness of things, and general health awareness, if news about the radical non-invasive and drug free treatment offered there, is spread widely by all our audio-visual media. It will be of great help to everyone. Through this letter I would appeal to all our audio visual media to take steps to spread this message in overall national public interest; which may help many who cannot afford the traditional surgical treatment, which is very expensive. However, the report did not cover anything about the non-insulin dependent treatment for diabetes.

It would be very useful and informative for all, if Diabetic Association of Bangladesh and Shaheed Suhrawardy Hospital jointly organise a seminar to create awareness of this non-drug approach of treatment that is possible. These diseases are now somewhat endemic, particularly among city dwellers due to sedentary life style; particularly with lack of walking as a part of daily routine, and the special exercises advised in the article for coronary treatment.

Finally, I would congratulate

Mr. Islam for writing this article, highlighting the safe, non-invasive and drug free option of proven cure for these diseases which are now rapidly spreading.

S.A. Mansoor, Dhaka

TIB reports

The recent report of the TIB, as planned and expected, has given rise to more political controversy than any solution to our century old graft culture. One major political party is demanding the resignation of the government due to increase in corruption, despite the ongoing drive to curb graft. The finance adviser is happy to note that there is no corruption now at the highest level or national level. The burden of corruption has been shifted to the poor in rural and semi-urban areas by the TIB. The corruption the TIB is talking about is century old and part of their livelihood.

One may not agree with me, but I am convinced that the TIB is serving the purpose of the vested interest and political groups. The TIB report has never been taken into cognisance by any government except the part which supports it. There is strong reason for that: The TIB report had never ever shown any positive direction to handle corruption, especially big political corruption, and has not suggested any definitive guidelines or operational plan to combat corruption. The ACC is interested to receive positive cooperation of the TIB to combat corruption. The ACC does not need, I repeat, does not need, any propaganda support, rather they need a genuine institutional development support to continue the normal anti-corruption activities, not any drive, under a clear legal frame work without any threat of coercion or political victimisation as apprehended by many.

Corruption is the act of two hands the giver and the taker. We have not heard a single word from either the ACC or the TIB about the givers in the recently instituted high level corruption. Why such silence? One will soon start thinking that the givers are active as usual, it is only the takers who have changed.

It is also time for the TI Berlin to have a deeper look at their reports' impact. It is becoming a political tool without any sustainable impact on corruption.
A reader, One e-mail

Traffic rules

Frankly speaking, new kinds of motorized and wheel-based vehicles are imported, not made by us. Sometimes, these kinds of technologies are bought from developed countries to make motorized vehicles.

Nobody can argue that we are maintaining proper discipline on roads, which is the combination of several types of rules and regulations. Does everybody know about the rules and regulations on roads? Is everybody alert as to how to ride or drive one's vehicle? Do they know the different speed limits on road?

It is vitally important that people know about traffic rules and regulations.
Md. Akhlaqur Rahman
Akhlaia, Sylhet

Diplomatic assignments

A few days back, services of some high-ranking army officers were placed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their appointment as ambassador in Bangladesh missions abroad. True, the government appoints officials outside the foreign-service cadre in public interest. I appreciate this but why not senior competent officials from other disciplines including varsity professors, are given diplomatic appointments?

Would the government please create the norm?
Professor M Zahidul Haque
Chairman
Department of Agricultural Extension & Information System
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Dhaka

Duration of government

Can you presume how long this caretaker government will go on? I can! No specific duration of this government is mentioned in any law. Though the constitution has given the direction but this government does not care about any constitutional order or provisions. The tenure of this government may be found if we explore the laws which are still playing a pioneer role to secure this government from any sort of trouble in doing whatever they want to do, whether it is prohibited or not by the constitution.

Abdul Kaium Khan
Amnesty International USA
Member ID- 2047068

Humanity vs. education

In our society, we find some opulent and educated people. Though they are educated, most of them are not truly educated.

Education means something more than just gathering information. Do we really attach any importance to this matter?
Md. Nazmul Kader Riyad
Dept. of Pharmacy
International Islamic University
Chittagong

Judges

I want to thank Mr. Shafi Ahmed, an Engineer from London, who wrote his opinion about Article 97 of our constitution on 18 June. I wanted to say in my letter that there is a provision "any other cause" in Article 97. Owing to the presence of such a provision in Pakistan's constitution, General Pervez Musharraf could remove the chief justice of the Supreme Court. A chaotic situation followed, which is yet to be resolved.

In our country, the president can act on the basis of this provision to remove the chief justice. As a student of law, I wanted to say that if the president does this, it will not be unconstitutional. That is why Article 97 should be amended.
Mohammad Rayhan Uddin
Department of Law
Premier University

Points to ponder

Close your eyes.
In your mind's eye relive the horror days leading up to 11/11/2006. Now, fast forward to 11/1/2009.

Could it be that we would be wishing for more of the CTG days, come January 11, 2009, when the same old, same old, mean, self-aggrandizing, corrupt politicians, their parties, and their coterie of corrupt, criminal henchmen, police, judiciary, bureaucrats and businessmen take back the helm of this country through devious means, and collude to push it down the road of ruin as they are wont to do in their quest for power and plunder of national wealth?

Going by what we read in the media, the machinations to bring back the discredited leaders of bankrupt, self-serving, political parties by whatever means, decidedly hell-bent to exact retribution for the incarceration and indignities rightly cast upon them, it is not far-fetched to imagine a redux of 1/11 days, come 2009.
God forbid!

The electorate will have none but itself to blame for bringing the dark days back on the people, should this happen to this struggling nation. It is imperative that a viable alternative is presented to the electorate, away from these vile leaders and their pernicious parties, before it is too late.

The media can help substantially in this regard.
Shawkat Ali
Dhanmondi
Dhaka

Vittachi's humour

I do hope you are being inundated with letters appreciating the wonderful humour in Nury Vittachi's articles. I usually keep it, as a treat, as the last thing in The Daily Star that I read but there are times when I cannot resist making it the first!

Please keep it.
Angela Robinson
Gulshan, Dhaka

Medical treatment abroad

The present caretaker government (CTG) released the chairperson and the general secretary of the Awami League on parole to get medical care overseas. Recently (The Daily Star, June 19, 2008), the BNP chairperson demanded that all political leaders who had received medical treatment earlier should be allowed to seek medical care abroad. While receiving appropriate medical care is a basic human right for all individuals, whether they are free or are in prison, bringing the perpetrators of crime and abuse of power to justice is also a matter of paramount interest. In our prison system, these financially well off political leaders receive much better care than the other inmates who are poor. In the past, they may have been abroad to seek medical care for ailment that could have been managed with the facilities we have at home.

The rich in Bangladesh have a tendency to seek medical care abroad just because they can afford it. However, affordability must not be a criterion to justify overseas medical care, rather the nature of the illness and unavailability of remedies at home should. It is time for the CTG to devise a policy to make arrangement for proper medical care for the political leaders at home and set rules about the criteria to seek treatment abroad.
Towhid Salam
Los Angeles
California, USA

Unruly law enforcers!

Prior to my leaving the country, I was stunned to read the news that a group of Ansars went berserk, took the law in their hands and attacked the patients and their relatives, who all were standing in a queue, anxiously waiting for their turns at the out patients department of the BSMU, over a silly incident. But was this a new incident? No! Not at all. The Ansars, an auxiliary police force but under independent

command, have been let loose in the past by the administration on unarmed innocent public. There seems to be no authority on top of them.

They apply their own rules in dealing with public wherever they are deployed on duty to assist the administration. In this particular incident, trouble started when the lone Ansar member responsible for maintaining order got himself involved as usual with the waiting patients and started distributing favours to the ones who were able to grease his palms and broke the normal code of justice. But what is astonishing, that after the incident this man was able to leave his place of duty, go back to his camp nearby and order out the rest of his colleagues to join him in their uniform with arms, swoop upon the poor patients and start beating them up right and left and at one stage took the lady patient and her relatives into custody. What a tragedy!

They are uniformed with or without arms and they easily get united to physically assault the public as and when some one protests their illegal actions or refuses to bribe them. Though such incidents are very common but only a few get reported. How can we claim to be a civilised nation?

A.B. Mohammed Zakaria
Stanwell, Staines
Middlesex, TW19 7EY

Why this discrimination?

Teachers play an important role in building up the nation. And only the teachers of government institutions don't play this role. Teachers of non-government institutions also have their contribution to the process.

Besides, the role of non-government teachers is no less important than that of the teachers of govt. institutions in spreading knowledge among the learners. So, if any facility is provided to the educational institutions, it should be given to both categories of teachers. But we have watched one thing in the national budget that the dearness allowance has been declared only for those who are govt. service holders. As a result, we, non-govt. teachers, engaged in various educational institutions are deprived of this facility.

I cannot but mention a point here that the students who are really better than that of rural areas enroll themselves in govt. institutions. I am not denying that there are no good students in schools or



Road digging

To some readers the photo might have appeared to be that of an earthquake aftermath or devastation left by aerial bombing! However, the photo was showing the condition of the footpath adjacent to the Secretariat boundary wall across Tophkhana Road. The photo was taken on June 18. If the condition of Secretariat's footpath is this, the condition of others could easily be guessed! Where will the pedestrians walk?

With the commencement of the rainy season, the street digging competition between different agencies has begun. The streets across the whole city have been turned into a digging field. Why do the authorities do it during the monsoon? At least during the tenure of this government we expected some coordination between the agencies.

How long will the city dwellers have to face this misery? I think nobody knows the answer!

Moinul Alam
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

colleges in the rural areas. But their number is not so high.

The teachers in the rural areas should be provided with more and more facilities and discrimination should be removed between the teachers of govt. and non-govt. institutions.

Md. Abdus Salam
Assistant Teacher (English)
Joypara Pilot High School
Joypara, Dohar, Dhaka

"Fatal" mistake

The term should not be "fatal bacteria" as reported by your Bogra Staff Correspondent (Ref: The Daily Star, June 21, 2008; page 2); it should be "fecal bacteria". The word 'fecal' is the US version of the English word 'faecal', which means 'from feces', i.e. from human or animal excreta. Hundreds of types

of bacteria are normal residents in the intestines of man and other animals.

These are called coliform bacteria, among which, the Escherichia coli (or E. coli) is one of the best known. Although it is usually harmless, occasionally it can cause inflammations of abdominal membranes or organs. But by no means, it can be called 'fatal'.

The presence of E. coli in the drinking water is an indication and measure of its contamination. Water containing a certain level of E. coli concentration or above it is not safe or suitable for human consumption. If you test the water from a municipal water tap in old Dhaka, you would find a lot of E. coli in it.
Humayun Hye
Baridhara, Dhaka

Keep it clean and green

The city is gradually becoming dirty, chaotic and unusable. Most of the roads are found littered with items of all sorts. Overflowing foul stinking garbage lie uncared for days together. The uncovered drains remain clogged with garbage thrown by the shopkeepers, much to the dismay of the pedestrians. Construction materials, push carts, open garage, food stalls, paper stands, shops of all items from ready-made garments to shoe and slippers and undergarments, the list is endless, all occupy the footpaths, thus putting more pressure on the city roads. Shopkeepers throw all their rubbish on the roads. Kitchen and garden wastes are thrown aimlessly on the roads far away from the dustbins. Old, worn out, tattered banners and festoons remain displayed unnecessarily for months. The city roads should be made free of hawkers and vendors as the first step to keeping the city clean. Footpaths should be repaired and made user friendly. Haphazard and mindless parking of vehicles should be severely penalized. In order to ensure cleanliness, penalties of various grades should be implemented regularly. Mobile courts should identify the defaulters on a regular basis and award penalties. The shops should be penalized BDT 200. Similarly, residents should be penalized BDT 500, and commercial and industrial establishments BDT 1000 if litters and wastes are found outside their premises. The Dhaka City Corporation should also

monitor cleaning activities routinely through the ward commissioners. Mass awareness campaign regarding cleanliness should also be organised on a routine basis. Moreover, road island gardens should be maintained. There are many road islands still not brought under the tree plantation scheme. Ornamental / fruit bearing trees should also be planted on either side of the roads. The DCC should closely monitor the maintenance of road islands by different agencies.

Shamim Ahmed
The Micronutrient Initiative
C/O Program Support Unit, CIDA
Gulshan, Dhaka

