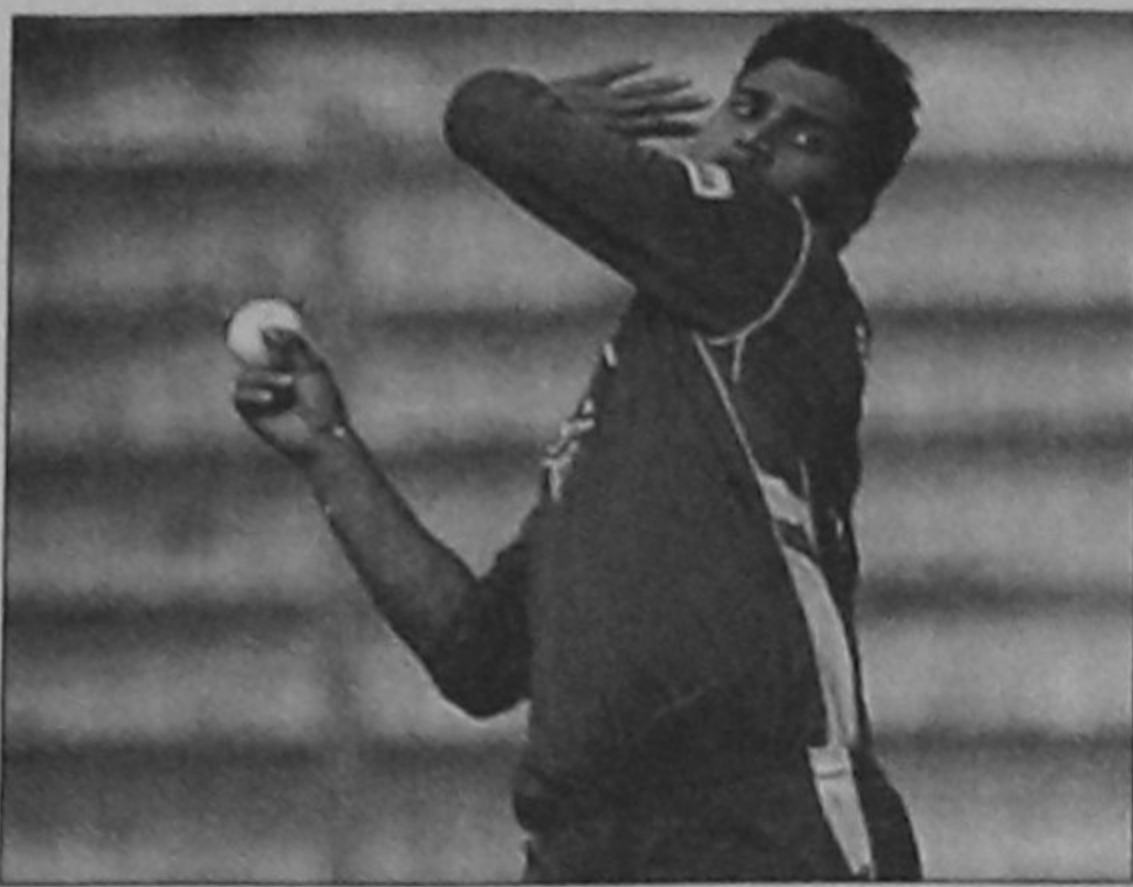


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

Sidelined Mashrafe



Like millions of cricket fans in Bangladesh, I am greatly disappointed and aggrieved at the decision of Kolkata Knight Riders, the worst performer in this IPL, which kept our top bowler Mashrafe Mortaza on the sidelines.

This year, I think the IPL is causing severe harm to our cricket as they have sidelined our two top players. The T-20 World Cup is ahead. Bangladesh is capable of playing good cricket in the T-20 tournament. But our two key players are not getting the chance to play, which I think will affect their performance.

That's why I urge the Bangladesh Cricket Board to take back our two top players from the IPL tournament.

K.M.Munna
Demra, Dhaka

Dr. Wazed Miah's passing

Eminent nuclear scientist Dr. MA Wazed Miah, husband of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, died on May 9, 2009. He was a very nice person, it is a great loss to the whole nation, we mourn his death and our deep condolence goes to the bereaved family. May the departed soul rest in peace.

BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia visited Shudha Sadan to pay homage and convey her sympathy to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The BNP also cancelled its human chain programme which was scheduled to be held on May 10, to show respect to the late MA Wazed Miah.

We hope this trend will continue from both sides. We expect that in the future Begum Khaleda Zia will refrain from celebrating her birthday on August 15, because it does not sound decent.

Nur Jahan
S.S Khaled Road
Chittagong

We have lost a great son of the soil - Dr. MA Wazed Miah. We all mourn his death. The leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia paid her last respect to Dr MA Wazed Miah at Sudha Sadan in the city. This is a positive sign. For this act, she deserves appreciation. It shows that humanity is above everything.
Akash Pradip
Lecturer and writer
Bangladesh Health Professions Institute
CRP, Savar, Dhaka

On 9 May, eminent nuclear scientist Dr. Wazed Miah passed away. After his death leader of the opposition Khaleda Zia went to Shudha Sadan to console Sheikh Hasina.

People were very happy to see this.

Mahfuzur Rahman Manik
IER, University of Dhaka

Mother's Day

On May 10, I celebrated the Mother's Day because I was blessed with a child by the Almighty in February, after many years of my marriage. Being the wife of the only son of the family, I was under tremendous pressure although becoming a mother was not in my hands. I along with my husband consulted many doctors and spiritual advisors to become a mother. Our well wishers suggested that we try test-tube and other ways. But I always desired natural pregnancy and I had the confidence in me that I could bear a child. Although sometimes my surroundings made my confidence level low and pushed me to such a condition, as if I had no right to live on earth.

Now, I have overcome the situation with mental strength and have the feeling of the happiest person in the world!

Rubab Abdullah
Residential Area
Dhaka Cantonment
Dhaka

Environment issue

Bangladesh has been largely preoccupied with managing moderate economic development, starting from a very low base, with an aim to provide basic necessities to the population. Poverty is still the main issue and will remain so for many years to come, given the moderately high population growth rate, limited land resources and periodic natural calamities such as flooding and cyclone damage. To put environmental concerns into perspective, the average life expectancy in Bangladesh is still only 51 years, and more than 70% of the adult population is illiterate. In rural areas, the environmental conditions have been impacted more by natural causes than by economic developments. Although the land is intensively cultivated, the land-use patterns have existed for many generations. In the urban areas, however, industrial and residential development has more serious environmental impacts in localized areas. The major concerns are poor solid waste management, effluent treatment and related health problems. Except in central Dhaka, air pollution is not a serious problem. The level of industrial development is still limited and comprises only 16% of GDP, compared to 26% in Pakistan and 42% in China, and the physical conditions tend to disperse and absorb the present low level of emissions. Though the environment may not be considered a priority concern in Bangladesh, some important environmental issues should already be considered to include deteriorating urban environmental conditions, threat of global warming and rising sea level, protection of sensitive environmental habitat. For the poor, living conditions in urban areas are worse than in rural areas, since housing, access to safe water, food supply and nutrition are at low levels. Urban waste dumps and effluent discharging into stagnant bodies of water already present serious health conditions for the urban poor. At present, and again with the exception of central Dhaka, Bangladesh is less concerned about acid rain and air pollution. Regarding CO2 - Bangladesh is very worried about the implications of climatic warming and rising sea levels.

The natural habitats support an abundance of aquatic and terrestrial species, including Bengal Tigers, crocodiles, turtles, monkeys and migratory birds but forests are currently being depleted at the rate of 10,000 ha annually.

Mohammad Rajja
Gono Bishwabidyalay
Savar, Dhaka

The price of each vehicle would be 32 lakh /each. But what's the salary of an upazila chairman? What a luxury for a public representative in a poor country and what a silly way of spending public money!

Import of 420 vehicles

Now, I have overcome the situation with mental strength and have the feeling of the happiest person in the world!

Truth Commission

We feel that the Truth Commission formed by our former caretaker government of Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed was wastage of time, energy and public money.

We welcome the statement of Law Minister Barrister Shafiq Ahmed that no corrupt government officials or employees should continue in their services, as it would encourage other government servants to indulge in corruption.

We strongly feel that the Truth Commission should never see the light of the day in our country. We also strongly believe that the powers and functions of the Anti-Corruption Commission should be strengthened by our government, lawmakers of Jatiya Sangsad, to make a free, neutral and independent Commission to investigate corruption against any citizen, ministers, MPs, businessmen, lawyers, doctors, teachers, policemen or shopkeepers without any interference from any authority and also without seeking any sort of permission or clearance from any authority.

However, if a person feels aggrieved or offended by the Anti Corruption Commission's action, he/she is at liberty to seek justice from the court.

It is my fervent appeal to the ministries concerned to see that BEPZA change their stand immediately in the interest of the country.

Acitizen
Dhaka

Iran frees Saberi

It is heartening to learn that Iran through its judicial process has freed the US Journalist Roxana Saberi after an appeals court suspended her eight-year jail sentences on charge of spying. By freeing Saberi, a citizen of both Iran and the United States, Iran has upheld the independence of its judiciary.

We sincerely hope that this will help in easing the tension created between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran following arrest of Saberi who was working for the BBC and the US National Public Radio.

Professor M Zahidul Haque
Chairman
Department of Agricultural Extension & Information System
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University
Dhaka

NSU incident

From TV channels and newspapers I came to know that a 'revolt' took place at NSU, following the increase of tuition fees. Indeed, it is a matter of great concern for me and other students who are studying at private universities. Sorry, nowadays, it is no longer a concern of private university students alone, rather the students of public universities are also suffering.

So, one is bound to admit that education has been transformed into a matter of business and capitalistic pursuits.

The issue has to be addressed in right earnest.

Aiman Bin Shoaful Hamid
Dept. of English
International Islamic University Chittagong

BEPZA's poor decision

While reading an article in a national daily recently, I noted that BEPZA has issued notices to the foreign investors who are building their factories at the Karnaphuli EPZ.

The article also mentioned that the food department earlier owned the land which, through an official process, was handed over to BEPZA. Now the department needs that land, hence BEPZA has served notice to the foreign investors to stop work.

I find it a suicidal move by BEPZA. Not only will these investors be annoyed and embarrassed, the future of FDI will be bleak. They will also claim huge compensations.

Since the Food Dept & BEPZA are our internal matters, I am sure the Ministry of Commerce, Food and Land should come forward to resolve it by giving alternate land to the department without disturbing the foreign investors. It is not a very difficult situation. It can be resolved if we have the will to do so.

In these difficult economic conditions, we should strive to help these investors in setting up their units here, so that our trade & commerce continue to thrive.

It is my fervent appeal to the ministries concerned to see that BEPZA change their stand immediately in the interest of the country.

Acitizen
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Remittance

Inward remittance by wage earners for the current fiscal period is expected to touch the figure of US\$ 10 billion. The figure is considered to be huge for an economy like Bangladesh. Despite its enormous impact on economy, there arises a question concerning its proper and productive utilization. Available records speak that this huge amount is only supporting the payment of import bills for the goods/commodities that can never be called essential or productive.

We have a new governor of Bangladesh Bank. He is known as an economist, educationist and above all a man with versatile qualities and experiences. To accord "congratulations" on his being appointed as governor is not enough but we seek Almighty Allah's blessing for his success to play a significant role in all fields of economic activities.

About 50-60 lakh Bangladeshis are presently working abroad and remitting about US\$ 10.00 billion per year which represents life-blood to the earning of foreign exchange. It is not palatable when we see that this hard earned foreign currency is being spent in unproductive ways.

Our expectation from the new governor is unlimited but it will be his great achievement if the causes of the poor wage earners are looked into prudently by initiating and adopting the following measures for proper utilization of their money, so that they can have a better life with return derived from their hard earned investment.

A) Certain portion of wage earner funds may be utilized for construction of Padma bridge with a package of incentives to be offered against the investment by the wage earners.

B) Wage earners' funds may be utilized for construction of flyovers, monorail, underground railway, especially in Dhaka and Chittagong with govt assurance that the wage earners will get dividend out of the investment and that dividend will be paid from the earning of tolls.

C) Instead of depending on donor countries and agencies, the wage earners' funds can be injected into the construction of power projects/ water supply projects, international hotels etc.

D) Special zones for the tourism industry at Cox's Bazar, Rangamati, Kuakata may be developed with the funds with attractive incentives to the investors.

If such activities are started henceforth, the country will be benefited in many ways.

Md. Mosharaf Hossain
One-mail

Nuclear power

I cannot believe that so many scholars and eminent persons are so far removed from the realities of industrial plants in Bangladesh as to recommend this as a viable option. The health risks associated with inappropriately managed nuclear waste are long-lasting and manifold. In a country where basic safety standards in any industry are a joke, and public understanding of the need for such standards is nearly nil, how DARE these people compare our situation to highly industrialized, edu-

No decentralisation

The political regimes have a centralised weakness: the tendency to overcrowd capital Dhaka, and denying administrative powers to the divisions, districts and upazilas.

Now the MPs are interfering with power sharing at the UZ level. The social and environmental long-term implications are ignored through ad hoc policies, and refusing to maintain continuity of projects inherited from the preceding regime.

Overloaded Dhaka is sinking, thanks to political wisdom! A recent video clip showed maps of Barisal showing the numbers of bridges required every 20-50 mile road distance. South Bangladesh is full of islands, rivers and canals, being a deltaic region; but the master planners in Dhaka are visioning huge mega bridges and tunnels. The traders in the southern district are very unhappy with under-developed roads and IWT services.

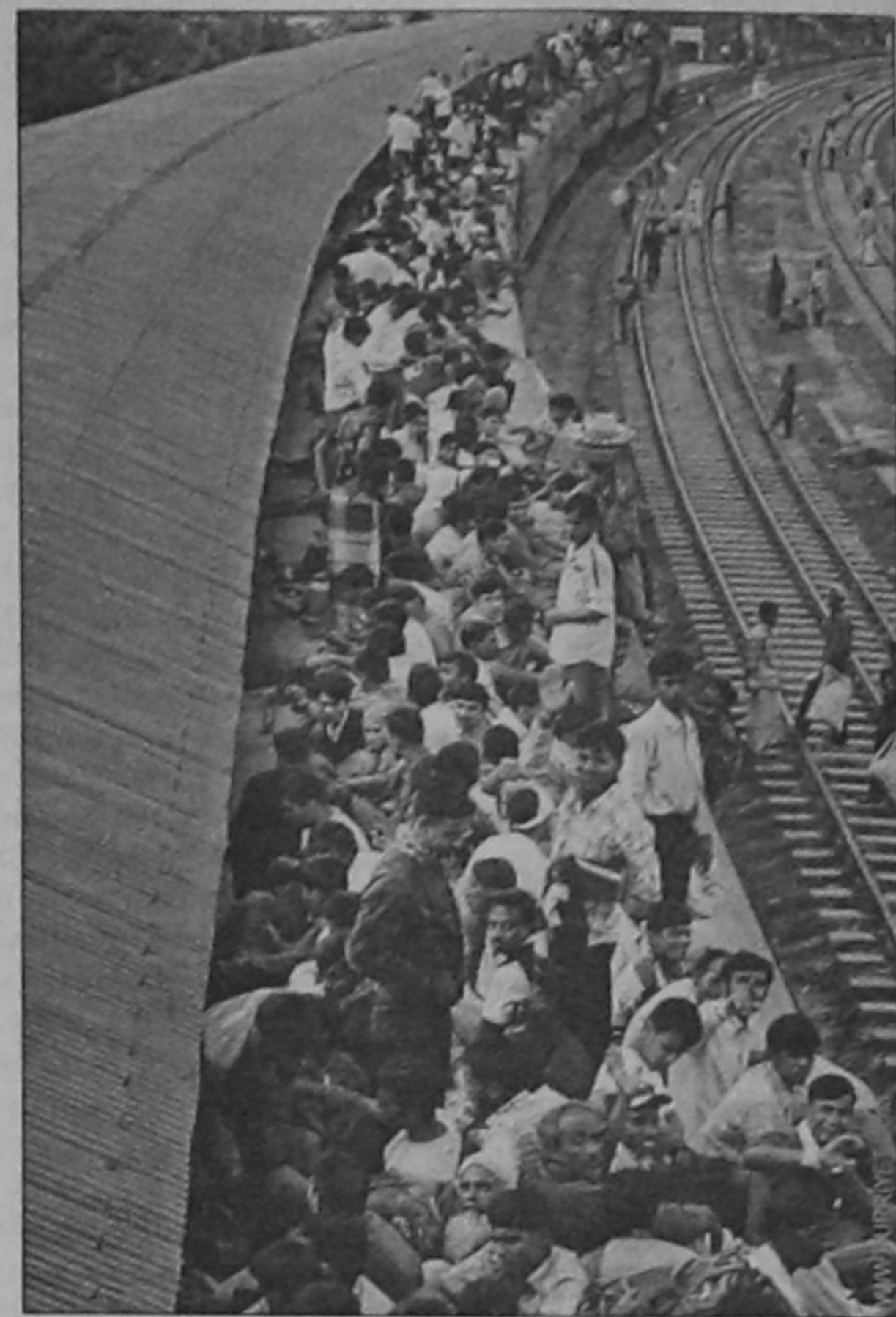
The concept of creating provinces is never debated in parliament (our density of population is one of the highest in the world, @ 1,000/sp Km).

Decentralisation is a vital topic for public debate; otherwise development projects would be stifled. Our political pundits have a myopic outlook--can't look beyond the active five years of stray governance.

There is no change in outlook; only erasing the predecessor's political holi [colour] marks. We

are not colour-blind, but routine public services have a monochromatic stability. Do colourful personalities crack up during emergencies?

Unfortunately, Dhaka lags behind people's aspirations-as usual. What's new in BD? Sidr-political! AMahasen
Dhaka



Given our track record with other highly polluting industries, it looks like a public health disaster waiting to happen.
Furious
Srimangal

Story of a freedom fighter

The winter white light fell on the pale figure standing next to a corner of the shabby house. Those dark, brown eyes penetrated the core of my heart and as I looked at him, his eyes reflected nothing but memories trapped in another dimension. I wondered how this man once fought fiercely with the Pak Hanadar Bahini.

Readers, you already should have guessed what I am talking about. Today I am writing this to tell you a story forgotten long ago but only remembered on some eventful days just as part of formality.

This mysterious person I mentioned above is Mr. Harun-ur-Rashid Khan, a valiant freedom fighter, who battled with the hyenas to bring smile to my motherland's face. As I sat beside him, I felt proud that one of my cherished dreams had come true.

I questioned him "Chacha, could you tell me how you joined the liberation war?"

Bursting with joy, he began to say, "In February, 1971, I left my job. At that time I joined Awami Shechashobak Bahini". I trained 100 members in Mahishbathan Gorosthan Eidgah Math. After Bangladesh was arrested on 25 March, the next day a revolt started in Rajshahi police line. The leaders of the uprising were DIG Mamun Mahmud and SP Shah Abdul Majid. The Pakistan Army arrested Mamun Mahmud from his office and he was never seen again. I also expressed my full support and participated in the war going between the Army and police force. Hundreds of policemen became martyrs in this uprising."

He stopped, breathing hard and continued, "In the mean time, the Awami League had begun to take preparations for the war. From 5th to 13th April till midnight a raging battle took place between Mukti Bahini and Pak Army. Afterwards, I established camps for training the freedom fighters with advice from captain Sharma and Mr. Ghosh. On 16 April 1971, I went to Murshidabad district of India. Here I tried to set up a camp in a primary school. A lot of young boys were so eager to fight for their country but there was no place for them."

"Later, I went to different operation camps and performed operations like demolishing the Farapur Bridge and after the bloodshed of nine months, the land on which you set foot upon became independent. The taste of victory is really sweet because of all the sacrifices

concealed behind it."

It was around 9:00pm. Time for me to go home and as I set off, he whispered into the air "Thanks! I do not see the young people nowadays coming to know about my experience of fighting in the historic War of Liberation." Shatabdi Biswas
A student of class IX
Paramount School
and College
Rajshahi

Second Padma bridge

As our country is criss-crossed by numerous rivers, we need many bridges, no doubt. But building bridges over big rivers like Jamuna, Padma, Meghna etc are not an easy task for a country like Bangladesh. Again it is not impossible at all in this age when financial and other assistance can be obtained from friendly countries and different agencies/organisations, if proper steps are taken at the right time. We built one of the biggest bridges in the world over Jamuna a decade ago. The present government is going to start the work of the first Padma bridge at Mawa point very soon. They also have committed themselves to starting the work of the second Padma bridge at Paturia-Daulidia point simultaneously. We think it is possible to undertake construction of both the bridges at a time. If that is impossible, paper works along with land acquisition etc i.e. all pre-construction works can be completed during the construction period of the first Padma bridge. After that the actual construction of the second Padma bridge can be started.

In this regard, I would like to say that any controversy over naming the bridges should be avoided.

Harun-ur-Rashid
Sobhanbag, Dhaka

Pay hike

The Pay Commission 2009, after exhaustive study, scrutiny, participation of a cross section of people, recently proposed a salary hike to take effect from July this year.

The structural increase registers, on an average, from 66 to 95 percent pay hike from that of the existing scale. It is of course, a pragmatic one in the sense that all parameter indices were taken into consideration.

But your apprehension in the 1st page lead news on 11 May 2009 threw the public sector employees into deep frustration. The moment the pay increase is announced, prices will automatically shoot up.

So we urge upon the authorities: please strengthen the market forces, stop unabated price spirals and check syndicated market manipulation.
Naseer Muhammad Mahboob
Paribagh
Dhaka

Open rail crossing!



It is not only outside the metropolitan areas that rail crossings are left open while a train is running at a great speed.

The photograph was taken right here in the city centre. Next to the FDC (the tinsel town) gate, there is a rail crossing and a reasonably big one.

Nobody knows what went wrong at that time. At least the camera within the mobile handset went right. Click... it went and captured the wrongdoing. Lucky for the vehicles nothing bad happened.

My mobile recorded valuable information. It was 25/04/09 and at 12:47pm.

Ashfaqur Ahmed
On e-mail