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Talking too much!

According to a Star Business Report published on May 06, 2009, GrameenPhone (GP) made an operating profit of Taka 562.86 crore in the first three months of 2009, despite the global economic crisis. This is the largest profit made by any mobile phone operator anywhere in the world.

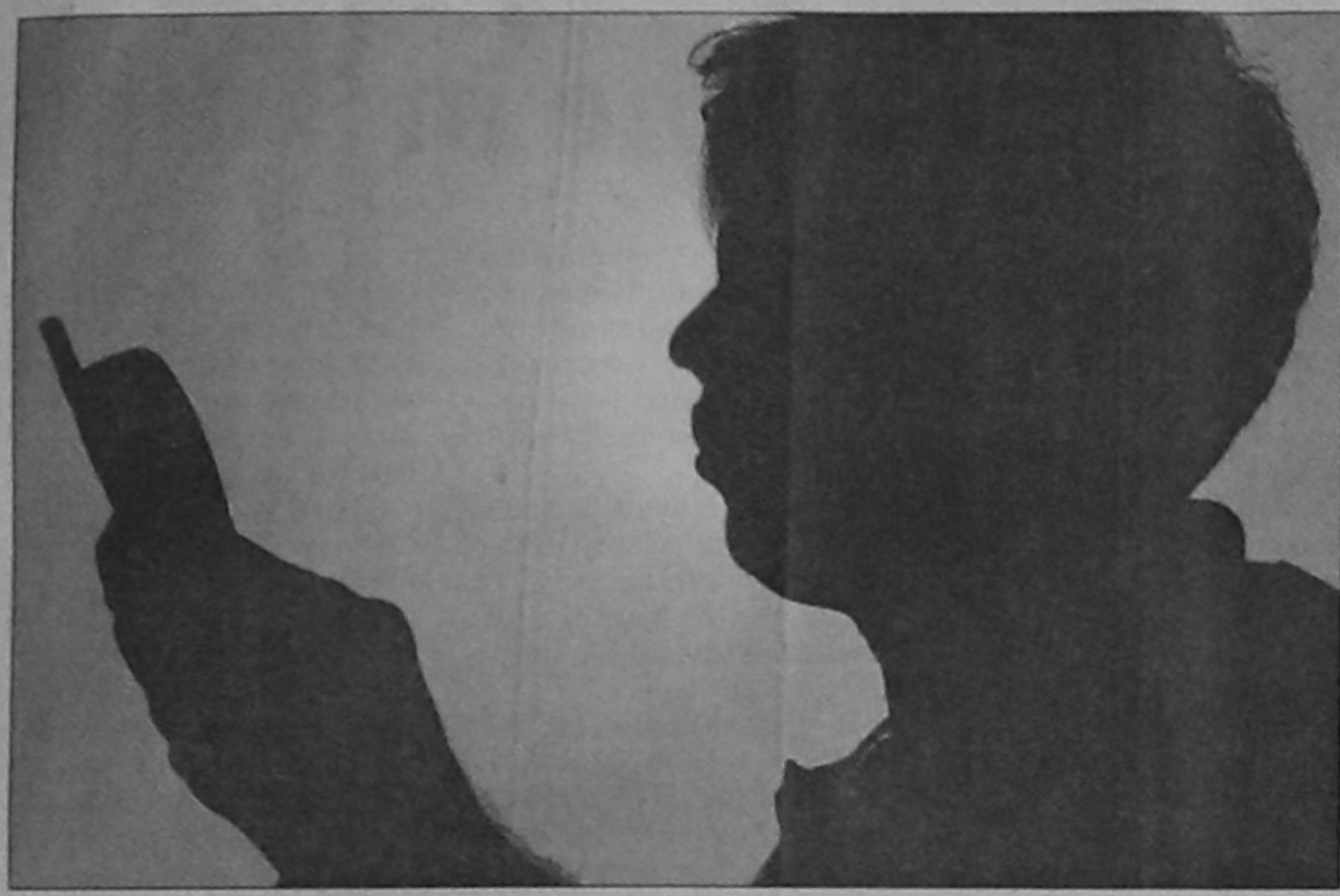
This colossal profit indicates that Bangladeshis love to talk. A nation which talks too much performs less. It is a pity that the research organisations like CPD or BIDS have not made a study as to how much of these mobile calls are productive.

According to my own study, 80% of these calls are unproductive. A rickshaw-puller whose average income per month is not more than Taka 3,000/- spends Tk 300.00 on mobile calls. A guardian has to invest in mobile phone

for his/her ward for admission into school or college. The lower income group is investing more on mobile talk-time than in food and healthcare, resulting in malnourishment of the younger generation.

The BTRC must do something to arrest mobile-addiction and should not take pride in contributing to the government large sums in taxes. If I remember correctly, Indian Parliament passed a bill 3 or 4 years ago prohibiting mobile operators from charging more than 50 paisa per minute. Our next budget session of parliament should pass a similar bill prohibiting mobile operators from charging more than 30 paisa per minute.

Reza Hussain
Baridhara, Dhaka



Banning tobacco

Chewing and smoking of tobacco have been among the biggest health hazards worldwide. Despite the inextricable link between a host of serious disorders and tobacco consumption, the practice continues to be widespread. This disturbing trend -- especially in developing countries has a lot to do with low awareness levels as well as lack of a sustained campaign against the menace. A campaign focusing on the hazards of tobacco consumption and highlighting the bountiful benefits that follow once the habit is kicked can go a long way in educating the masses. A sizeable section of the tobacco-users happens to be blissfully unaware of the dangers that smoking or chewing of tobacco invites. More worrying is the fact that in recent times, more and more teenagers and youths, even children, are increasingly getting caught in the murky tobacco trap. As for the country, it has a high incidence of tobacco consumption and consequently, tobacco-induced ailments -- the most perceptible being cancer.

The benefits of quitting tobacco are many. It can safely be concluded that discarding the habit comes nearest to being reborn. It results in a number of both short-term and long-term gains that shape a healthier lifestyle. Physical well being apart, the tobacco-quitters stand to gain a lot in terms of mental health. The manifold advantages of quitting tobacco make a strong case for launching a sustained campaign against the menace. The Health Department, together with voluntary organisations and the media can start a long-term campaign aimed at disseminating information on such a vital issue.

Mohammad Shahidul Islam
National tourism worker

MPs and local government

In the past, the volume of work was limited in case of individual person, business houses, even states. Gradually workloads as well as spaces have been increasing. Considering this fact, management thinkers have invented 'division of labour' and are insisting on 'specialization'. This is true not only for production methods but also in state affairs.

For many decades, we have been hearing from our policy makers that they would put proper emphasis on the local government. Almost everyone is in favour of strengthening the role of local bodies. They were against the unsolicited interference of local MPs in the field of local development work. We know that the main task of the MPs is to enact laws in parliament which is a big and noble task on the part of the MPs. It is not necessary to

become an MP for supervising the construction work of roads, buildings etc in his/her area. But it is a matter of regret that many MPs are more interested in outside work, rather than attending parliament sessions.

We are taken aback that the present government is involving the MPs in the work of upazila parishads and municipalities. In the last BNP period, we saw the MP of Barisal city was the whip of parliament and then he became the mayor also. Why do we need the same man to do so many things at a time? Don't we have competent men?

Harun-or-Rashid
Sobhanbag, Dhaka

Student politics

The puppets of the student leaders are compelled to be present in their respective hall guest rooms at a certain time every night. This is a common scene in every hall of Dhaka University. But this is the highest seat of learning in the country. Keeping this in mind, parents send their children to this university. But things change when they enter the campus. They have to get involved in politics to survive. To stay in their hall, students have to attend the guest room meeting at night!

It must come to an end.
Sayeef Shahriar
One-mail

Depression in Gulf States

The global recession is a good lesson for the super-rich Gulf states. The economic decline has started, and it cannot be stopped with wealth. The Equalizer Effect is 'on'.

The monarchs should now start pondering about plain living and high thinking. It is an insult to the poorer Muslim majority states in other parts of the world, who constitute the majority in the Islamic world. Suppose there were no oil and gas in these desert kingdoms--then what else to offer?

The mighty OIC can easily solve the Israel-Palestine issue, if the members take a united stand. Israel is a home base for the Western imperialists: to grab the energy resources; and to suppress the Muslim states. Divide-and-rule is a classic weapon used by colonialists.

The current century is for change. Grab it!
CAH
Dhaka

Investigations and media

Very often we find that responsible people in high positions reveal information, gathered from suspects during questioning in connection with serious crimes, to the print and electronic media which adversely affect the interest of the case in question. We have

seen this happen during the investigation of BDR carnage and also in the 10-truck arms smuggling case. It is needless to say that if vital information is leaked out before completion of the job, it will only help the people involved in the crime as this will enable them to go on a damage control activity, which will harm the case in the long run.

Therefore, it is desirable that all concerned should refrain from talking to the media during the investigation into a case. Further, it gives opportunity for others to make statements to the press to cause confusion in the minds of the people.

Abul Mohsin
Siddheswari Road
Dhaka

An appeal

I would like to draw kind attention of the authorities which are managing transports from Shyamoli crossing to Adabar. Every morning around 8:00am, I face a serious jam at Shyamoli crossing while coming out from Adabar area by car, due to huge influx of cars, minibuses, mini buses, large buses plus rickshaws. This is the peak hour. So, all the people in and around Shyamoli crossing need to go to office, school and to their respective destinations. It is very surprising that there is a useless road connecting Adabar ring road to Mirpur road near the bus counter of Hanif, Super Bus and other bus counters, the road is blocked by some pillars at the end approaching Mirpur road, so, no vehicles can go through it. Why is this road not usable? If this road is opened to the public transport, then all the vehicles can take left turn coming from Adabar ring road to Shyamoli crossing, there is no need to come to Shyamoli crossing and take left turn towards Gabtoli/Technical. The vehicles going towards Gabtoli/Technical can use the connecting road from Adabar ring road to Mirpur road.

Please look into this matter and open the road for all of us.

Nazakat
One-mail

Sri Lankan scene

It is a matter of great satisfaction for the peace loving people around the world that Sri Lankan armed forces have proved their worth by defeating the LTTE. We support the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka.

The country with 73.8% Sinhalese, 13.9% Tamil, 7.2% Moors, 4.6% Indian Tamils & 0.5% others was saddled with unprecedented ethnic unrest, militancy for more than three decades. It has finally succeeded in ending the civil war.

We earnestly hope that our Saarc member country will prosper in the days ahead.
Mohammad Zulfikar Ali
Pallabi, Mirpur-10
Dhaka

Common people not allowed!

I went to IEB, Lalkhan Bazar, with a view to visiting the telecommunications and technology fair. Well, I went there along with my friends, but the security guard did not allow us to get in. He rudely discouraged us and mentioned that we were too small to realize the solemnity of this day.

However, without knowing anything we moved to and fro just outside the fair premises. All of a sudden, we noticed that a slogan was inscribed on the banner that, "We want to build a digital Bangladesh with the participation of all classes of people". It should be noted here that there was no fee for entrance.

Later, we waited there for more than two hours. By this time, we figured out one thing that the rich coming in cars were greeted respectfully. Needless to say, the treatment was highly discriminatory.

Again, we saw that hundreds of people were not permitted to enter the place and they stood under the hot sun for hours. A minister was due to visit the place. No doubt, we the people who come from middle class and poor families are being deprived of every kind of opportunities, fundamental rights and privileges.

Now, my question, "Is it possible to build a Digital Bangladesh without the participation of poor people, whereas the majority of people in our country live below poverty line. The issue has to be addressed in right earnest."
Mohammad Mohiuddin Momen
SSC examinee
Halishahar, Chittagong

Rivers of Dhaka

Most of the cities in the world were established on riverbanks. So was our Dhaka. It is endowed with four majestic rivers. But out of sheer greed and negligence we are killing these lively water flows, so rare around the world. A section of government officials particularly those involved in land administration are the root cause of such encroachments. Every encroachment is initiated by some sort of dubious paper works by such officials. So if we want to stop suffocation of rivers and reclaim encroached lands we should start from land offices.

The recent High Court ruling may serve as a wake up call for the government. But if any committee is formed for this purpose, people from different disciplines may be included. Fewer the number of bureaucrats, the better, because many of them might have actually served the encroaches when they worked at the field level. It should be borne in mind that even in colonial period, no river land

was leased out to anybody. All these started after 1947 partition. The cab astral survey (C.S.) of 1908 may be taken as the base line.

M. Sanaul Huq
Uttara Model Town, Dhaka

Bangladesh is a country full of rivers. But at present these rivers are being despatched to the pages of history. We read "Dhaka stands on the river Buriganga". This Buriganga is passing through a critical moment. Not only Buriganga, but also the other rivers around Dhaka city are going to die.

Everybody should come forward to save the rivers.
Mahfuzur Rahman Manik
IER, Dhaka University

Mashrafe disappoints

The way Mashrafe bowled in the final over in his first match in the IPL was indeed heart breaking for fans all over Bangladesh. I just cannot understand his reason for being nervous. This is just a game, not a war. Why can't he just play his natural game? This is not the first time he has done this.

In Zimbabwe, during the final over, he gave away 32 runs by bowling full tosses which caused Bangladesh to lose the entire series. I hope the BCB will look into it and try to correct him and give him the confidence he needs.

He is a great player and should not feel nervous or frightened. He should just go out there and give his natural best.

Aminur Rahim
New DOHS, Mohakhali
Dhaka

Dr Wazed's suggestion

While the contemporary world is changing with the advent of new inventions of science and technology, Bangladesh is lagging behind. It is regretful to note that these days students do not like to study science. Rather, they are very much interested in business studies. After completing their education, students of biotechnology, pharmacy, information technology, geography and environment science, agriculture science etc., are not getting jobs. They are feeling frustrated. These brilliant students with excellent results should be in good positions wherefrom they could render their services in nation building. At this moment, Bangladesh needs to engage brilliant students in the arena of research.

Presently, the nation is experiencing a huge shortage of electricity in almost all sectors. Now the common people and politicians realize what great mistake they made by giving no importance to Dr.

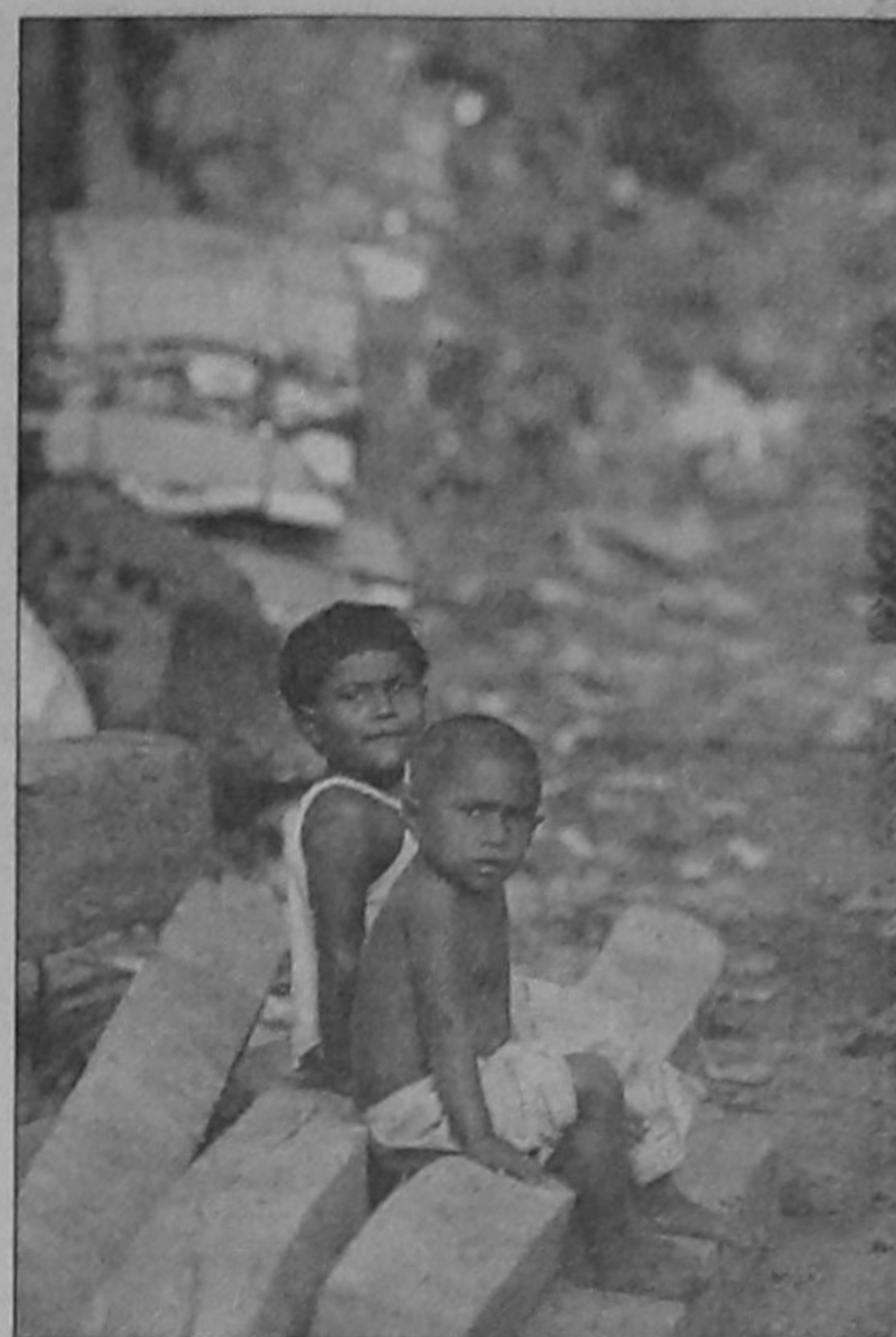
Population growth

It is a matter of great concern that the population is rapidly growing creating heavy pressure upon the small territory of Bangladesh. Most of the people live under poverty line.

Because of fast increase in population it is now impossible to supply essential things in required quantities & various types of wants with problems are cropping up rapidly in this limited area (Bangladesh) & besides this, low standard of human living, food crisis, insufficient water supply & poverty are rising in all respects.

Please think about the matter seriously & allow various media outlets to educate people on the dire consequences of further population growth.

Asad
New DOHS, Mohakhali
Dhaka



SHARIF SARWAR / DRINKNEWS

M. A. Wazed Mia's suggestion to establish a Nuclear Power Project (NPP) at Ruppur in Pabna long ago. There is no room for emotion but to undertake the NPP for immediate implementation. Dr. Mia's memory must be kept alive.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has advised the engineers of the country to research on river training for the benefit of Bangladesh. People of Bangladesh, of course, thank her for this wise instruction.

No one will raise a single question if a scientific research institute is set up and named after Dr. M. A. Wazed Mia, a great scientist.

Everybody will agree that Dr. Mia was a scientist with vast knowledge and experience in the area of nuclear technology. He was known for his honesty, sincerity, good manners and what not. After his death people, irrespective of political affiliations, admitted that we had lost a great son of the soil.

Mohammad Harun-or-Rashid
EXIM Bank Ltd.
Motijheel Branch
Dhaka

CU

We the general students of Chittagong University are very much anxious about the present unstable condition prevailing on our campus. Some days ago we saw the clashes between two rivals groups of student wings. We see that there are many empty seats in the halls. The whole thing has been politicised to the point where general stu-

dents have no say, and bloody clashes often erupt over allocation of seats. The outsiders ruin the academic atmosphere of the halls and the campus.

The university authorities have announced that the empty seats will be given to the meritorious students. They should go by the announcement.

B. Singha
Department of Law
Chittagong University

Programmes on TV

Almost all the TV channels announce their programmes in advance for the viewers of New York, Dubai, Middle East and obviously for local viewers in their bid to highlight special occasions like birth and death anniversary of Kabi Guru Rabindranath Tagore, National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam and for other purposes. It is very difficult to memorize all the programmes of all the channels at a time and hence it is of no use to telecast the programmes in advance. On the other hand, the programmes are punctuated by several advertisements that bring the viewer to zero tolerance level. The programmes are not viewed fully by the viewers. On top of that, unscheduled load shedding shatters the patience of the viewers who make it a point to view a special programme of their choice. So, TV programmes, especially drama serials, cannot be enjoyed due to disturbances of advertisements, load shedding and for telecasting of many drama serials at a time

through different channels. Hence, viewers enjoy only TV news and rest of the time browse from channel to channel.

Almost all the talk shows are monotonous where participants are not that well versed to make comments on certain national and international issues. The programme producers should be more careful while making programmes which must highlight culture and tradition of our country. Talk shows in different TV channels should be stopped. These are all personal opinions expressed by the individuals who seem to be self made intellectuals.

Taking all these into account, watching TV has become boring and tiresome to the viewers.

Md. Lutfar Rahman
IUBAT- International
University of Business
Agriculture and Technology
Dhaka

Smoking in public places

Smoking in public places has become a common phenomenon. Certainly, it is an indecent thing. Nowadays it has spread out among all classes of people. Though some teenagers think that smoking is part of smartness, but it is not true.

Chain smokers not only harm themselves but also the non-smokers. The government has enacted a law banning smoking in public. But nobody is going by this law.

Tanvir Mahmud Soikot
Dept. of English
Govt. Edward College, Pabna

Martyrs' memorial museum

Dotted around with halls and academic buildings, Rajshahi University remains concealed in the impenetrable membrane of pandemonium-pulsating with life flowing rhythmically through the arteries of our beloved city-Rajshahi. The hub around which thousands of youngsters have become renowned citizens of Bangladesh, the nucleus of the existence of blossoming flowers that had bloomed to their full potential enlightening the minds of today's generation with new notions, perceptions regarding philosophy, economics and science.

Yet staying incognito to people living far and near this educational institution, RU, still bears the gaping wounds inflicted upon it during the liberation war. RU Martyrs' Memorial Museum is a constant reminder of the atrocious acts of brutality that raged over it, taking away the lives of many, curtailing their promising careers and leaving innumerable mothers and sisters without their near and dear ones-distressed and grieving for their irreparable loss.

As part of my frivolous ways of squandering the summer vacation, I managed to sneak into RU campus and finding none in the deserted area, I ran helter-skelter forlornly and eventually found myself standing before this museum hemmed in by an eye-

catching gigantic Shahid Minar on one side and RU central mosque on the other.

Propelled by an yearning and recovering my poise, I went inside and after writing the information necessary, I was allowed to enter the galleries showcasing the everyday things used by the martyrs, the books written by

Harun, Barkat, Rafique. Hanging on the walls coloured as white as plumage, were photographs plunging people into the abyss of techniques used to counter the diabolical Pakistanis, such as preparation for the breach of section 144 and "Gayebana Janaja" under the leadership of Maulana Bhasani.



them and some photographs clinging to the threads of their personal life, their struggles to be emancipated from Pakistan. Notable among them were Dr. Shamsuzzoha, Professor of Chemistry, who embraced martyrdom in 1969 and Nurul Islam who strongly led the protest after the death of Zoha, Martyrs Asad,

Scuffling through the crowd, I stepped into the other two hall rooms where coming across the dress they wore, their favourite song or even the teacup in which they drank tea along with the mortar shells, rocket launchers, daggers used by the Pakistani Army, skulls and fragments of bones found from the mass

graves behind Zoha Hall, devoured my entire being, leaving elliptical remarks that inflamed my heart lacerated by steady lashes of intense abhorrence towards those who have made futile efforts to term our glorious war as a mere interne-cine feud.

The contributions of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Ziaur Rahman and above all, the commendable magnum opus drawn by Kamrul Hasan to raise communal harmony against the barbaric killings so emblematic of malice were all stored in a spruce manner that if persisted, will surely be able to attract tourists. Sorely tempted to visit the library beside the museum, I was both elated and bizarrely flabbergasted to see such a wide variety of books based upon the historic events of 1971, my head still revolving around the whirlwind of the grotesque operations performed with such precision by the Pakistan Army, I walked away from the museum, towards a country, acres of land acquired at the expense of blood, loss of so many precious lives united towards only a sole purpose, an independent Bangladesh. Shatabdi Biswas
A student
Paramount School and College
Rajshahi