

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.

# Pedestrians' rights

What a refreshing article by Zarina Hossain in the DS of 07 July. She is the first one to take up cudgels for the long neglected pedestrian, who daily risks his/her life on the narrow, pot-holed and crowded streets of Dhaka.

Her analysis for a 'transport prioritising policy' is impeccable and should be seriously studied by the relevant authorities and implemented as soon as possible. Accessible and well-maintained

footpaths will lead to the healthy habit of walking to one's destination especially by those who are forced to go by car due to lack of footpaths. The heavy traffic on the walkways (alas, too few!!!) alongside the lakes will be a revelation to sceptics.

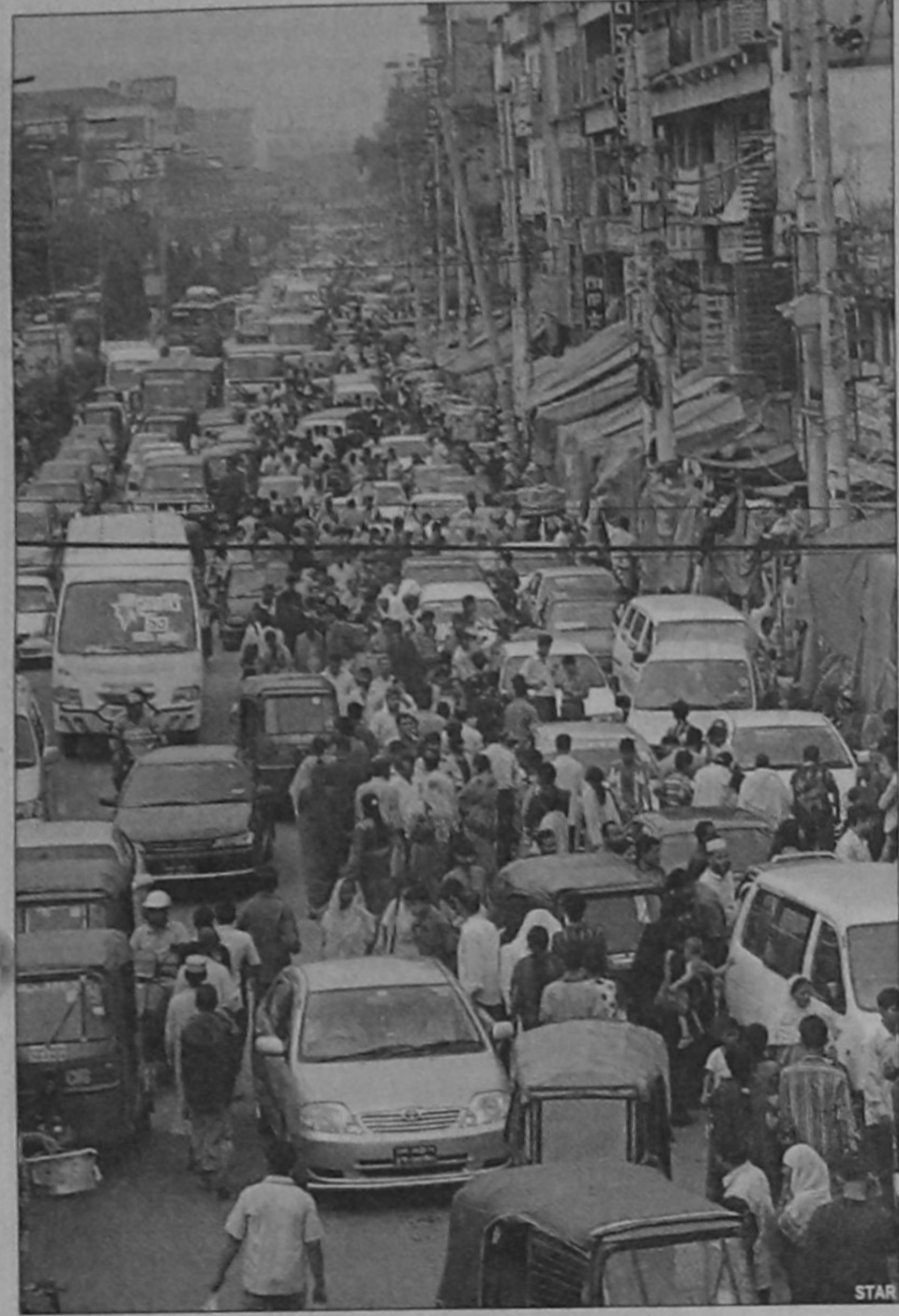
Cheap mass transport for the masses is still a dream. The current decrepit buses (how do they get their fitness certificates?) can only be used by those who are physically

in the All-In Wrestling class. Ms Zarina seems to be an anti-CNG devotee, but where is the time for 'long-term benefits against short-term prescriptions'. They are quite indispensable still for the be-car and the be-bus having to travel fast for longer distances at a reasonable cost.

Her comments on private cars and her recommendations to curb this menace are commendable. I have already written 40 letters on the subject in the last two years. How can the present state of Dhaka's roads (only 7-8% of area instead of minimum 25%) cope with the 3.5-4 lakh stretched out, gas guzzling monstrosities that infest the environment. They occupy 75-80% of the road space while transporting less than 2% of the privileged class at astronomical cost. But Ms Zarina, this is Bangladesh and our ministers, MPs (who are elected to serve the people!), bureaucrats, businessmen etc are all lining up for free perks including cars, when most of them are undoubtedly millionaires with their own fleets of cars in their garages. Who will bell these FAT-CATS?

If there is a serious flaw in the article, it is, that the word rickshaw, has not even been mentioned. 3-4 lakh of these ply Dhaka's lanes and streets providing quick, efficient and cheap transport to millions of the old, infirm, women, children, people with small loads, the disabled and others too many to mention. They provide employment to the poor, income and livelihood to about 2-2.5 million rickshaw-related people apart from adding more than 10 crore taka to the GDP every day. One cannot even dream of doing away with them until a viable alternative is found and that may take decades.

**Sikander Ahmed**  
Niketon, Gulshan-1, Dhaka



## Birth registration

I am happy to have the information (source: The Daily Star; 04-07-09). Moreover, the acknowledgement that Birth Registration is required for sixteen important matters bounds the citizen to have such registration! Third July is observed as the Birth Registration Day.

Though 16 essentials have not been noted, I am eager to add two more essentials/issues! I am requesting our authorities to ensure circulation of two messages as well, along with marriage registration. First, both the bride and groom would sign the commitment that no dowry has been given and taken, respectively. Secondly, they would carry only two children.

We are aware that a significant proportion of our population is illiterate. Therefore, my suggestion is to circulate the messages through cinema halls. Such a measure, I believe, will be very effective.

**Dr. Lalun Nahar**  
Dhaka

## Attention, DMP

I am a new resident of Banani, Block # H and I walk in the morning along with my wife. Many other residents (both male & female) also walk along the new bridge on Road # 11 joining Banani & Gulshan and the adjoining roads in the vicinity.

I have noticed that there are quite a few cars in the morning being used for "Teaching how to drive" along these roads run by driving schools.

I find it very dangerous as they do not have any sign on the vehicle that it is a Learner's Car. Hence we are not alert. As most of the walkers are aged including me, their alertness or reaction to any probable accident is not as fast as others'.

In other countries I have noticed that a big vertical sign on the roof of the car and small sign in the front, side & back of the vehicle are displayed so that the pedestrians and drivers of other vehicles can be alert and hence take precaution when such vehicles approach them.

I am not against them 'Learning or Teaching' how to drive, but I strongly feel that the sign of those vehicles must be conspicuously displayed on the vehicle, so that any pedestrian can recognise it and be extra cautious when the car approaches them.

We request the Traffic Police Commissioner to review it and take necessary action.

**Arshad**  
Banani  
Dhaka

## Karwan Bazar

Karwan Bazar has been in the limelight, thanks to the triple murders within a week. The homicides are linked to extortion.

As per newspaper reports around Tk 5 lakh is extorted from legal and illegal business every day; seven people were killed in the last four months in feuds over extortion and the number of deaths is no less than 40 in the last 10 years in the premier kitchen market. Extortion, drug peddling and prostitution in or around Karwan Bazar are an open secret to all. Though the law enforcement agencies, especially police, know about it, they have not taken any effective measures to solve the problem.

I have a practical experience on how extortion is going on in the kitchen market in broad daylight in connivance with a section of law enforcement agencies. I had the opportunity to go to Karwan Bazar to buy vegetables and fish for the hall's canteen run by students. There are two types of prices in the wholesale market; one is direct price which excludes KUALI (extortion) and the second one is indirect price which includes KUALI. The KUALI has to be paid by the customers on palla (one palla=5kg) basis. For these reasons, the prices of the vegetables, fishes and fruits are increased by around 5%. Small kitchen goods sellers have to pay the musclemen, otherwise they cannot do business in Karwan Bazar because most of the kitchen goods are brought from different regions of the country.

Finally, the government should take immediate action against those extortionists and a section of law enforcers. It will bring down the prices, alongside improving law and order.

**Suman Saha**  
MBA (Strategic and International Management)  
University of Dhaka

## Campus violence

A student must train himself to be a man who will exercise the rights and bear the responsibilities of a free citizen. He will have to fight for his country in a war and run it along progressive lines in peace.

But students today are affected by campus violence. This must come to an end.

**Md Ehsanul Karim**  
PS to Registrar  
Southern University  
Bangladesh

## No good leaders?

There is no denying the fact that the prosperity of a country depends on the skills, acumen, integrity, and many other qualities of the top leaders to a large extent. It is a matter of regret that there is a dearth of honest and wise leaders in the political arena of Bangladesh. We have noticed that corrupt and dishonest politicians have been influential and dominating in the central positions of the political parties. We further see that people of impeccable integrity are marginalized or they are not interested in politics at all and dishonest people are taking advantage of it.

That's why we see that these people do not have the slightest concern for the welfare of the nation and they are boycotting parliament on any lame excuse. It is absolutely ridiculous and shocking to see some allegedly corrupt leaders as the chairmen of some parliamentary committees.

So, it is time for a change and we want to see those people as our leaders who are highly educated, have impressive personalities, can rise to the occasion, can face challenges, and above all entirely committed to the interest of people.

**Ghazi Shahadat Hossain**  
Teacher, Premier University  
Chittagong

## Tourism

I read the letter from Engineer Shafi Ahmed (Friday, 3 July 2009) with surprise.

He seems to suggest that the best way of improving Bangladesh's tourism industry would be to make it a little more like Las Vegas by building copies of famous buildings and other such artificial attractions.

As a tourist who is currently in Bangladesh, I am appalled at this idea. If I want to see Las Vegas and copies of the Eiffel Tower I shall go to these places! The attractions of Bangladesh for tourists are in its scenery and culture. I have not been here long, but have enjoyed every moment of my trip so far, from Old Dhaka and the Liberation Museum to the charms of Tangail and the countryside beyond the capital.

Adding cheap tourist attractions will not bring the tourists of Europe, Asia and America that Bangladesh is looking to attract. It would help if the infrastructure could be improved, particularly the roads in Dhaka. After all, when there is much to see and enjoy here, it helps to be able to get where you want to go!

**Timothy Barnes**  
London, UK

## Tipaimukh and experts

Quite a lot has been said about the Tipaimukh dam in India, waiting to be, perhaps, commissioned soon!

Briefly and pertinently said, it is absolutely for the river water experts/engineers and the related professionals who are to assess the situation, and gauge the outcome of the proposed dam. Then a purely technical report is to be submitted to the political governments of both the countries to 'weigh' the pros and the cons in order to decide its feasibility and the possible fallout.

It is expected that based on the above the decision will be made. But not by parliament members who are 'non-technical' VIPs.

Therefore, if any minister speaks in favour of a dam it is not well accepted in today's world. So, let the real experts do the talking and assessment, etc. This is my appeal to all concerned.

**Syed Imtiaz Ali**  
Banani, Dhaka

## What are we doing?

We are a great nation indeed! Not only we break the rules, disobey the law, destroy our environment and corrupt our very own systems, but we also are a nation of insensitivity. God has endowed upon us great natural resources and with our brutal actions we are wiping out the natural assets one by one. We have already destroyed Chittagong Hill Tracts, the Sundarbans is still too indomitable to be destroyed by us and we are almost on the verge of destroying the natural beauty of Sylhet. The latest example of our wonderful and sensible nation's 'love for environment' is the destruction of 15,000 trees in Sitakunda. If not for the environment, we could have at least thought of ourselves, from practical viewpoint. We all know that trees are extremely important, especially for the seacoasts to protect the land from storms and high water tides. Like the Sundarbans has stood tall like a fortress during Tsunami and Aila. The ultimate fate of this country is sealed, and we are just facilitating the end to come sooner, we are a country which is going to be devastated by natural calamities and end up being submerged into the sea.

We all must remember that nature always hits back, and when nature takes revenge, it is usually the cruellest one.

**Munira Rahman**  
Niketon, Dhaka

## Tipaimukh

Tipaimukh dam is a much talked about issue in our political arena nowadays. It has become "political football" in Bangladesh. We all know that India is going to construct a dam on Borak river that will certainly be a death trap for Bangladesh. If India constructs this Tipaimukh dam, the greater Sylhet and Mymensingh regions of Bangladesh will turn into desert. The Surma and the Kushiara will dry out that will wreak havoc on the environment of Bangladesh. A colossal climatic disaster will ensue in the north-eastern part of our country. The environmentalists and the members of civil society are protesting this move vociferously. The mass media are playing a pivotal role in this regard. But unfortunately, the BNP, the main opposition party, is trying to gain political mileage from this issue.

But, surprisingly, why is the AL-led government keeping quiet? Is it kowtowing to India? We hope that the government will take bold and effective initiatives to solve this problem diplomatically. They should try heart and soul to stop India from building this dam.

**Molla Mohammad Shaheen**  
Lecturer, Dept. of English  
Leading University, Sylhet

## Cyber crime

The development in IT is wonderful. Along with these immense advantages, we are facing computer related problems like virus, hacking, e-mail spoofing, computer vandalism, pornography, money laundering and so on. They are called cyber crimes. The spread of this crime has become a matter of global concern & a challenge for the law enforcement agencies. Computer is used as an instrument to commit crime.

The criminals find it easy to destroy the evidence soon after the crime is committed. Not using the security system of computer is also responsible for it.

Cyber criminals pose a major threat to computer networks all around the world. We need to be very alert about all such developments.

To introduce people about crime & criminology, MBSTU has taken a project on different categories of crime.

**Sharmin Sultana**  
Criminology & Police Science  
Department  
MBSTU, Tangail

## Embankment

The government wants to realise some taxes from untaxed money to support development in such important sectors like power, infrastructure and PPP. For the last few days, several learned intellectuals have been interpreting these terms in their own ways, some parliamentarians have also registered their names in this exercise.

I shall invite suggestions from your readers on an embankment on the southern side of Bangladesh to protect our motherland from adverse affects of sea bottom-rise, cyclones and tidal surges etc.

Ours is a very small country to sustain the heavy burden of a huge population. The new land that will be raised by deposition of silt due to blockage by the embankment will help support our rapidly increasing population. This will reduce the concentration of population on a small piece of land which we have now.

**Dr Abdur Rahim**  
Farmgate, Tejgaon  
Dhaka

## Rain and load-shedding

Rain is the ultimate solution to minimizing load shedding in our country! I have noticed that we get whole day supply of electricity whenever there is rain. So, we should believe rain could be the ultimate cure to this long-term load shedding problem that the people of this nation have been suffering from.

We have seen poor planning of our previous governments in minimizing load shedding. Therefore, instead of planning unnecessarily and wasting time, we should only keep on praying and praying for rain.

**Minhaj Ahmed**  
Uttara, Dhaka

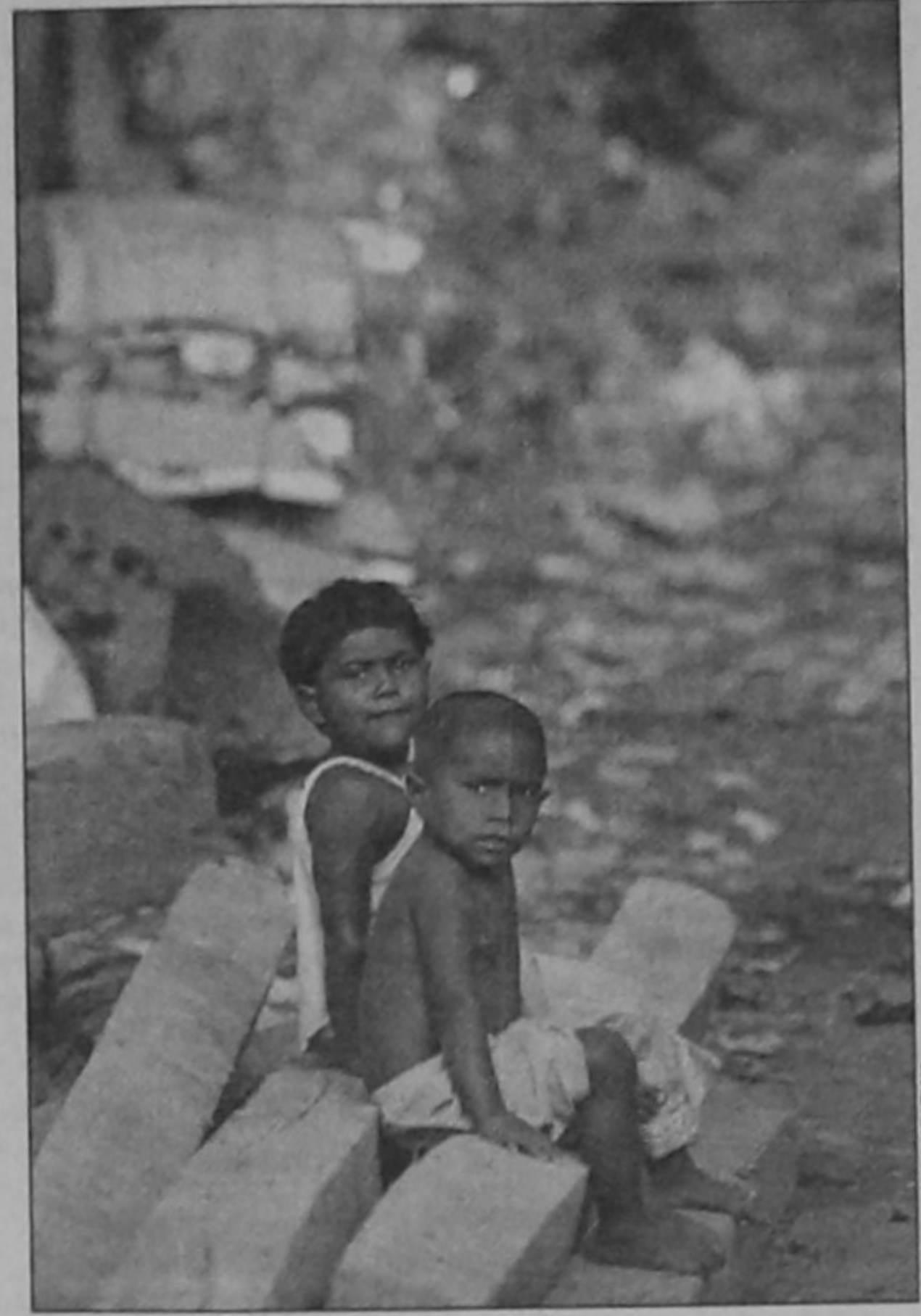
## Schools or public nuisance?

I would like to draw your attention to the following matters that deserve urgent attention of our relevant authorities. Although these have not yet grown out of proportions but they certainly have all the potential of becoming so, if our city planners do not pay any attention to them now. I am approaching you as I feel very encouraged by the awareness that you have created by your efforts in saving our rivers. Your endeavours have already won laurels for you and all of us can see that these are producing very good results. Our government has given full support to your efforts.

1. The matter relates to setting up of schools and other educational institutions within the residential areas in and around the Dhaka city. While establishing such schools, etc needs to be certainly encouraged, the manner in which these are then being run calls for attention of the government. At least an hour before the schools start, and then end, the transport system in the areas of the schools and of the surrounding areas should be observed. This would show how it runs to which the school authorities do not at all pay any attention. It creates terrible traffic jams on a daily basis during those hours that create havoc to the lives of those who live in residential houses in those areas. These houses also do have children who go to other schools - a daily activity that causes them a lot of problems, frustration and loss of time.

2. Of late, these schools have started the daily use of microphones in classes just when they are brought into session around 07:30 or 08:00am in utter and total disregard of their neighbours. Facing this onslaught on daily basis has become an intolerable event for those who fall in the senior age levels and, especially, who suffer from serious medical complications like high blood pressure, cardiac ailments, and are under post-operative convalescence, etc - apart from the fact that these onslaughts disturb the basic civic decorum and tranquillity in these areas.

3. A very disgusting thing that is also being noticed in these areas is that one or two makeshift shops are selling cigarettes, betel leaves and the likes. These normally attract the rickshaw pullers and other passers-by. The number of such shops has increased tremendously over the recent years and sometimes these are noticed well inside the boundaries of the houses. One wonders which authorities do permit and allow the establishment of such shops, or do



# Deprived children

Street children are called ragamuffin, street urchins, foundlings, tokais, waifs and strays, rootless children and so on. Most of them are the abandoned children of their parents. So, nobody has any control over them. Generally, they earn their livelihood begging, stealing, cheating and doing manual jobs.

So, people in general, and the govt in particular, should take all possible measures to ensure a better life for the rootless children. Otherwise, they will become troublemakers and cause immense harm to society.

**Md Al Amin Khan**  
Notre Dame College, Dhaka

the authorities keep their eyes closed and ignore them? Many unknown faces are noticed there that cannot be verified while they have an excellent excuse of standing and loitering around there. Who can guarantee that these persons are genuine and that they have a valid reason to be there in a residential area. This has led to frequent incidents of hijackings, thefts, robberies and similar other crimes in such areas. Putting up such small shops in the immediate vicinity of schools requires to be stopped as early as possible by taking strict measures in the way the government has taken bold steps to save our rivers.

I earnestly seek the urgent assistance of our appropriate authorities to take up the matter in all seriousness and impose necessary restrictions on the management of such schools - at least banning the use of microphones in such residential areas and ensuring that the sounds in classes remain confined to their physical boundaries.

**M. Rahman**  
Uttara Residential Area  
Dhaka

## Unconstitutional?

I draw the attention of the people who are experts on general and constitutional laws to the provision of Bangladesh Constitution in the Article 8 (2) that declares that the 'Fundamental Principles of State Policy' "...shall not be judicially enforceable." Now we know that the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, in response to the famous case, ordered the government of Bangladesh to implement the separation of the judiciary from the executive and made sure that the government obeys. Will I be wrong if I say that since the separation was enforced judicially, it was unconstitutional?

**K. Alam**  
Manipuripara  
Dhaka

## We appreciate

Congratulations to you and The Daily Star for winning the National Environment Award 2009. We appreciate your bold effort in writing against greedy, unscrupulous land and river grabbers, encroachers etc. This practice has been continuing for a long time in the absence of active monitoring.

I would also like to thank you for your endeavours in development of English learning skills for students of various schools. These efforts are helping many to improve their levels of skill in learning English.

**Md. Zuhurul Alam**  
Mirpur Housing  
Rupnagar, Dhaka

## Saving energy

For many years, the people of Bangladesh have suffered due to frequent power cuts and power crisis. The country is suffering due to insufficient energy sources, corruption, and rapid growth of population etc.

On June 19, the government of Bangladesh decided to use the Daylight Saving Time (DST). When it was 11 o'clock at night on June 19 the time was moved forward by one hour to 12 O'clock midnight. It was explained that 250-300 megawatts of electricity are going to be saved every day.

I want to thank the govern-

# Sewerage management



During the rainy season, the highest rainfall is recorded during July- September in our country. Heavy shower and water-logging in towns take place regularly. It is the common focus of everyday news of both print and electronic media. Just one or two hours of torrential rain inundates our urban areas.

Surprisingly, our sewerage management is yet to be well planned. Wasa should handle the matter a lot more efficiently.

**Md. Raiful Alam**  
Employee  
Advance IT Ltd