

Changing with climate change

While the global community now recognises the importance and the urgency of CCC, we need to realise that even if we diligently implement all the protocols and embrace all best practices available to control emission of greenhouse gases, the results on the earth's temperature will not be significant for at least two or three more decades.

ABDULLAH SHIBLI

I lend my voice of support to Professor Shairul Mashreque's call for combating climate change (CCC), published recently in *The Daily Star*. Unfortunately, CCC is not as easy as it might appear. While the global community now recognises the importance and the urgency of CCC, we need to realise that even if we diligently implement all the protocols and embrace all best practices available to control emission of greenhouse gases, the results on the earth's temperature will not be significant for at least two or three more decades.

I might also add that in spite of the agreements reached at the recently concluded G-8 meetings in Italy, and the actions taken by the US prior to that, a reduction of global warming by 1 or 2 degrees will remain an elusive goal.

Two major obstacles

What is the reason for such pessimistic views about the prospects of CCC? Very briefly, my cautious approach emanates from the two major dilemmas we are facing. The first relates to the divergent interests of the developed and developing countries. The developed

countries are pushing for a time-bound reduction in carbon emissions that is applicable to all countries.

The developing countries, including two of the largest polluters, India and China, on the other hand, are not too eager to take on a larger burden to curtail carbon emissions. I do not fault them since they have a strong case; it is universally acknowledged that the developing countries were not responsible for the existing level of carbon in the earth's environment.

In per capita terms, these two countries are not even in the list of Top 10 emitters of Greenhouse Gas (GHG). The seriousness of the rift in the two camps can be fathomed from the personal intervention of the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton who, at the Non-Aligned Movement conference, appealed to India to pursue low carbon growth, and repeated the call during her trip to India.

The second dilemma relates to the cost of carbon dioxide (CO2) reduction, and the higher cost of cleaner technology. It is now well established that most clean technologies are costlier than their traditional counterparts. Electric power costs more to produce when cleaner fuel or abatement technology is used. Cleaner cars

cost more and so do cleaner electronic goods.

Here comes the paradox; while consumers prefer cleaner technology, they do not want to pay more for it. Various consumer surveys in developing countries as well as developed countries reveal a preference for clean technology, whether in durable or in consumer goods. However, the preference for goods produced with cleaner technology dropped drastically when the respondents were shown the prices of these "clean" products.

An illustration of cost and benefits

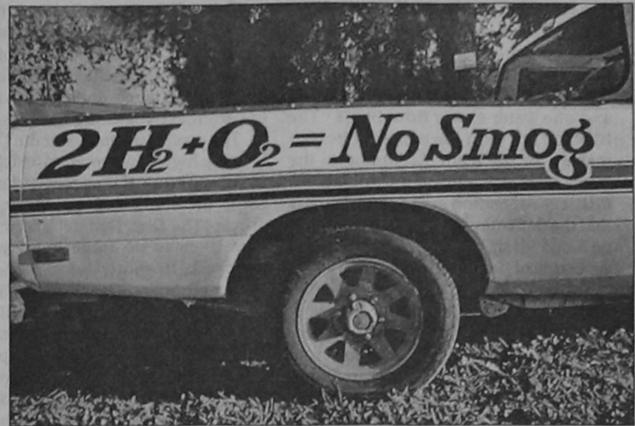
The development and adoption of greener technology is expensive. "Who will pay for it?" is the trillion-dollar question. The various countries at the heart of the tug of war play

out this issue. Let us take the case of automobiles. Toyota makes both internal combustion and hybrid cars. The latter uses less fuel and emits less CO2 per gallon of fuel used. However, a hybrid car costs more, which the owner can recoup in 3 to 5 years depending on miles driven and the cost of fuel (see Table).

This simple illustration, following an approach originally elucidated by Prof. Amartya Sen, spells out the costs and benefits of cleaner technology in a time horizon. It also brings to the fore the key issue in the current debate: Will the EU or G8 countries be willing to provide financial incentives to hybrid users in developing countries?

Bangladesh's possible leadership role

While the G8 countries and the developing countries try to sort out the



Hybrid cars. A possible solution?

conflicting issues and strike a balance in sharing the burden of CCC, Bangladesh can in the interim play a key role at various international forums. Bangladesh, which is expected to bear the brunt of the effects of global warming, can play a major role in the international debate on CCC. We can and should speak out at the UN summit Copenhagen summit and other global forums, but our views will be heard and respected if we lead the way in reducing our own carbon footprint by adopting innovating approaches to CCC.

What can Bangladesh do to show its commitment to CCC? In addition to the ones that Bapa, Ben and other environmental organizations have proposed, there are a number of other steps we can take individually and collectively, including:

- A comprehensive energy policy review, including support for solar and other renewable energy.
- A full assessment of our emissions and cost of adoption of cleaner technology (example of how to generate electricity).
- Involvement of the business community and active participation of the community in the 3C Initiative.
- Enhance national awareness of the impact of deforestation, open burning in agricultural fields and landfills, and agricultural soil management practices.
- National debate on the importance and adoption of a roadmap to low-emitting society.

Dr. Abdullah Shibli lives and works in Boston, USA. He is Managing Partner of NAS Enterprises, LLC, an international consulting firm. He has worked at Harvard University and the World Bank.

Table Comparing the Cost of Operating Traditional and Hybrid Cars

Price of Car A: 18000 (Toyota Corolla) Price of Car B: 22000 (Toyota Hybrid)	Annual Gasoline Savings			
	20,000 Miles driven per year		30000 Miles driven per year	
	Car A	Car B	Car A	Car B
Annual gas consumption	667	400	833	500
Price of gas (per gallon)	2	3	4	5
2	533	667	800	
3	800	1000	1200	
4	1067	1333	1600	
5	1333	1667	2000	
6	1600	2000	2400	

Table comparing the cost of operating traditional and hybrid cars

Merchant mariners sidelined

It is unfortunate that the governments in Bangladesh have never (except during the brief period of Bangabandhu's regime) tried to explore the potential human resources of the marine sector in real earnest. They relied more on civil or military bureaucrats, or on political henchmen, than on the marine experts in managing the sector.

HUSAIN IMAM

LEST we forget, we are a maritime nation with a rich history of courageous officers and sailors sailing across the seas and enriching the merchant navy. Even today, the country can rightly boast of producing many excellent merchant navy officers, engineers and sailors who are not only serving in the Bangladesh Shipping Corporation but also competing with others in the management and operation of ships of many renowned shipping companies around the world.

The country can rightly boast of having an excellent Marine Academy, which was set up in 1962 at Jaldia, a beautiful hilly area on the eastern side of the Karnafully river near Chittagong port. The academy, with an initial capacity of 42 cadets, can now provide pre-sea training facilities to as many as 200 cadets at a time and is considered

one of the best maritime institutions in the world.

The academy has so far produced more than 4000 officers, many of whom have got the most coveted certificates of Master Mariner and Chief Engineer from the department of trade and industry (DTI), UK, and are now serving as senior engineers and officers in world famous shipping companies. Some of them are even holding key managerial positions in these companies.

Some of them are playing important roles in the management of international seaports, shipyards and seamen training institutions across the world. Some of them are working in international classification societies and earning a good reputation.

It is unfortunate that the governments in Bangladesh have never (except during the brief period of Bangabandhu's regime) tried to explore the potential human resources

of the marine sector in real earnest. They relied more on civil or military bureaucrats, or on political henchmen, than on the marine experts in managing the sector. That is why we see, more often than not, organisations like BITWC, BIWTA, BSC, Chittagong Port, Mongla Port being headed by politicians, civil bureaucrats, or by retired defense personnel.

As the adage goes, "the job of a blacksmith cannot be done by a potter." We cannot expect a person without proper background or experience to do well in running the affairs of such organisations, which are required to handle ports, shipping and inland waterways. These are specialised fields where educational background, training and experience in the appropriate field are essential requirements for holding key positions, and these qualifications can only be achieved through a long process of pre-sea and at-sea training on board ocean going merchantships.

We all know that putting the right person in the right place is the first and foremost precondition for good governance at any level. Because of too much politicisation or too much militarisation, these norms were flouted at will by our past governments. The result has been, as is supposed to be, dismal, to say the least.

Mongla port, which was once con-



Only mariners can keep the sector afloat.

sidered as one of the finest natural ports in the region, is now dead in a real sense. BIWTC, the water transport company, which was once considered to be the lifeline of the entire water transport system of this region, can now hardly breathe without ventilators. Its beautiful paddle steamers, which used to reach the people to every nook and corner of the southern region of this country in great comfort and safety, are now things of the past.

The Bangladesh Shipping

Corporation (BSC), that began its journey after independence with only one ocean-going ship, flourished at God-speed and increased its fleet to 30 in less than a decade because of efficient handling by some brilliant and highly experienced officers of the Bangladesh merchant navy. The organisation began to rot only when these officers either retired or were replaced by people of other disciplines to suit different purposes.

It was expected that the incumbent

government would quickly get rid of the politicisation/militarisation syndrome of the past and utilise our human resource to the fullest potential. In the marine sector, there is no dearth of skilled hands or qualified persons to bring back its past glory.

Unfortunately, our expectations got a jolt when we learnt that retired defense personnel had replaced the director general of shipping, reportedly a merchant navy officer of outstanding caliber.

With due respect to the noble profession of our armed forces, and high regard for the rigorous training and disciplined life they are continuously subject to, appointment of a retired officer from the armed forces -- or for that matter from any discipline other than a truly professional body -- to the post of DG shipping is likely to prove counter-productive because of the nature of the job and the field this department has to tread upon.

The Awami League-led government came to power with the promise of change and a vision for digital Bangladesh. It must start reversing the old, ill conceived and unproductive practice of the past and put the right person in the right job in order to achieve its goal.

Capt. Husain Imam is a retired merchant navy officer.

LEST WE FORGET

In memory of Mr. Sulaiman Chaudhury

SYED MUNIR KHASRU

WE live in times when, in the public domain, idols are difficult to come by and role models are either non-existent or non-functional. However, there are people who silently and profoundly influence our thoughts and acts by the lives they live and the examples they set. The person about whom this article is written was neither a public figure nor a celebrity. He was one of those low profile, high morals personalities who inspire many across generations at a time when most public figures can't even inspire one generation. Mr. Sulaiman Chaudhury, my maternal uncle and first cousin of late Mr. S.M. Ali, the founder editor of *The Daily Star*, is one of those rare persons who led a life embedded in principles and enshrined with humility until his demise on July 23.

A banker by profession, Mr. Chaudhury rose to the pinnacle of his career by becoming the head of three banks -- Janata Bank, Shilpa Bank, and Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha. Even after his retirement various governments used to seek his advice and wisdom, particularly in the reformation of the banking sector.

He was the only son of Late Habibur Rahman Chaudhury, Principal of the Government Aliya Madrasa, Sylhet, who left this world when Mr. Chaudhury was only 14 years old. Difficulties and challenges test our mettle, and have a significant influence on our personalities. Mr. Chaudhury was one of those brave and noble warriors who, from that early age, took responsibility as a challenge and carried it out in a manner that left footprints for many of us to take lessons from.

During his long banking career, Mr. Chaudhury served the nation with

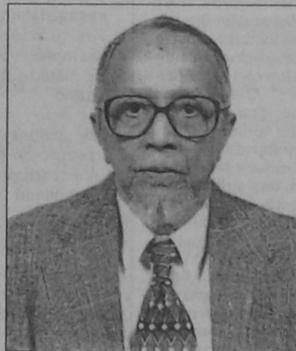
utmost professionalism, honesty, and integrity. To his professional peers, he was the charming, humble, and social figure who made more friends than colleagues in the span of his long career. When introducing officers who were much junior to him in the hierarchy, he never would use the word "subordinate" and would refer to them as either "junior colleagues" or "young friends." The gesture may be small, but the underlying message is much larger than the act itself. The message being, how to respect others no matter what position one holds or how high and mighty one might be. Even after retirement, he commanded the respect and evoked the love of those who worked with him. As they say, the real test of one's character is how one is treated when one is no longer in power or position.

An ever-curious person, Mr. Chaudhury took active interest in life

and people. Particularly, he had this uncanny ability to relate to the younger generation, whose thoughts and acts may not always have been similar to those of the generation that Mr. Chaudhury represented. This is one rare quality that both the brothers, Mr. Chaudhury and Mr. S.M. Ali, had, which gave an opportunity to people from our generation to learn as well as be inspired by the ideals they upheld in their lives.

Most importantly, he would carefully listen to our opinions and viewpoints even when in some cases they may have been different from that of his generation. For me personally, both the gentlemen had significant impact in terms of positive thinking and their constant encouragement on my writing.

An extremely generous person, Mr. Chaudhury literally practiced the dictum from our Holy Quran, which states



Mr. Sulaiman Chaudhury

that when our right hand gives out alms or charity even our left hand is not supposed to know. From providing financial assistance to friends and relatives in distress to sending seasonal fruits to the orphans, from inviting the

imam of the local mosque for dinner to his engagement in charitable causes -- he was a genuine philanthropist and social worker. He would never miss an opportunity to touch peoples' lives and bond them in friendship -- irrespective of age, class, religion, and education.

Mr. Chaudhury was an active explorer of life. Whether traveling, or attending cultural shows, or trying a new restaurant, or meeting new people -- his mental stamina remained as robust as ever till the end.

He was a great soul whose life and deeds will far outlive the grains of the soil that now holds him in eternity. His acts and deeds will continue to motivate those who have had the opportunity to know him and be inspired by his ideals. May the Almighty rest him in peace and grant him the serenity that he brought to the lives of so many when he was alive.

Syed Munir Khasru is a Professor at the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), University of Dhaka.