

The dream lives on

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SABER HOSSAIN CHOWDHURY

I had the privilege and honour of hearing Senator Ted Kennedy speak at the Democratic National Convention at the Pepsi Centre in Denver, Colorado on August 25, 2008.

Exactly one year on from that date, he has said his final goodbye. America has lost one of the most remarkable and influential senators in its history, the world a political Leviathan and a model public representative, and Bangladesh one of its truest friends ever.

For almost five eventful decades, not only was Sen. Kennedy at the centre of the most burning and sensitive issues facing America and the world, he did much in his own style to help shape them too by challenging the status quo and fighting injustice.

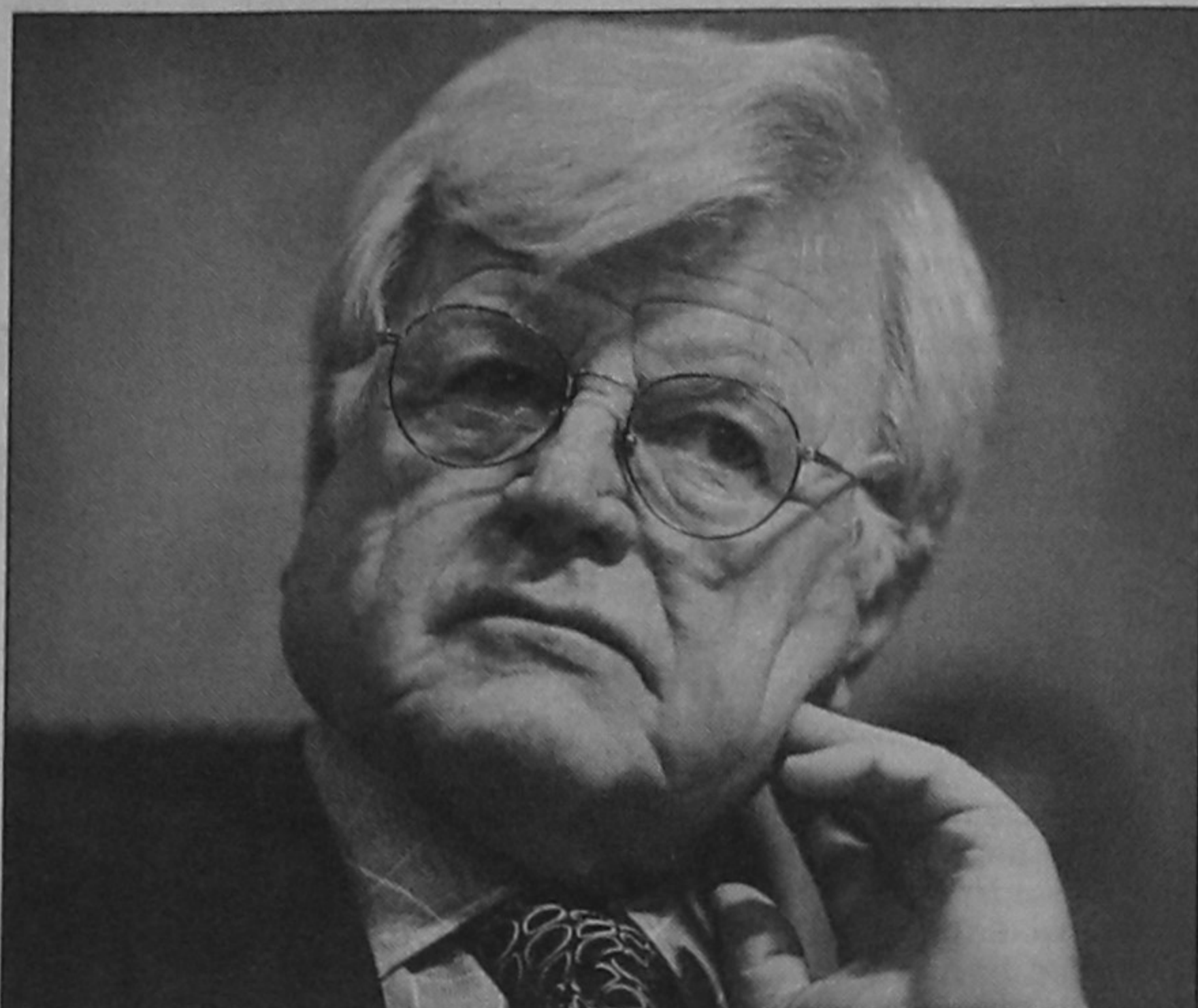
He publicly supported our Liberation War and was sharply critical of the Nixon Administration's opposition to it. He

personally visited refugee camps in India in August 1971, and alerted the world to the human tragedies and sufferings he witnessed there and the reign of terror that was unleashed on the Bengalees in the then East Pakistan.

In his submissions to the Senate, he portrayed Nixon's support for West Pakistan as "nothing short of complicity in the human and political tragedy of East Bengal."

Following the independence of Bangladesh, he visited Dhaka in early 1972 and, in a speech at Dhaka University, said: "Even though the United States government does not recognise you, the people of the world do recognise you."

An internationalist and a world citizen, he was a champion, crusader and defender par excellence of the poor and politically disadvantaged and, as a prolific legislator much respected across the political spectrum, he set and defined the standard for the Democratic Party -- and



A friend in the time of our need.

America -- on health care, education, civil and human rights, campaign-finance reform and labour law. He characteristically opposed the war in Vietnam and, from the beginning, was an outspoken opponent and critic of war in Iraq.

A year ago, as I made my way to the Convention Hall, monitors flashed the

news that Sen. Kennedy had arrived in Denver and would indeed be addressing the delegates.

Courtesy of National Democratic Institute (NDI), I was also in Boston for the 2004 Democratic National Convention and, at a reception for the foreign delegates, had the pleasure of

meeting and speaking to the senator. That meeting, and the few minutes of focused conversation we had wherein he enquired about Bangladesh and expressed his deep affection for its people, was the thrill of a lifetime for me.

I kept in regular touch with him thereafter through his office, and was deeply impressed by how up to date and current he was on events in Bangladesh and also, despite his pre-occupations, his willingness to engage and get others in Congress and the Senate to do so on matters such as assassination of S.A.M.S. Kibria, attempted assassination of Sheikh Hasina on August 21 and the fact that there was no real progress in the investigations.

Given his medical condition, I knew I would not be able to meet him in person this time round in 2008, but hoped that somehow he could make an appearance at the Convention. As he walked to the podium, the lion of American politics was greeted with tears and cheers. The words he spoke that evening in Denver will forever be embedded in me.

He started off by saying about how nothing, nothing could have kept him away from the Convention and the fact that he was there to stand in solidarity with the delegates to change America, to restore its future and rise to America's best ideals. In victory and defeat, he went on to say, we have never lost our belief that we are called to a better country and a

newer world. He spoke about hope, new hope -- which he referred to as the cause of his life -- for justice and prosperity for the many, not just for the few.

His closing words ran thus: "There is a new wave of change all around us, and if we set our compass true, we will reach our destination -- not merely victory for our Party but renewal for our nation. This November the torch will be passed again to a new generation of Americans. The work begins anew. The hope rises again. And the dream lives on."

The torch has now passed to a new generation and the work has indeed begun anew.

In a brief statement announcing his death, his family said: "We've lost the irreplaceable centre of our family and joyous light in our lives, but the inspiration of his faith, optimism, and perseverance will live on in our hearts forever." These are words not just of a grieving family but the sentiments of many in grief across the world.

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Saber Hossain Chowdhury is a Member of Parliament.

Bangladesh on the road to COP15 in Copenhagen

In Copenhagen, Bangladesh's voice will be more important than ever and the presence of a strong team of negotiators is of vast importance. As a forefront country in addressing the challenges of climate change, it is crucial that Bangladesh plays an active role at the conference in order to demonstrate the consequences of climate change to the world and to represent a voice for the developing countries.

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COP15 -- a window of opportunity to act on climate change

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing the world today. To meet this challenge, most countries, back in 1992, joined the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The objective of UNFCCC is to stabilise the atmospheric content of greenhouse gases at a level that prevents dangerous human-made climate change. The convention is a "framework convention." This means that it is a comprehensive tool for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, but contains no binding obligations to reduce them.

Each year, countries from all over the world meet for the annual climate change conference (Conference of Parties). From December 7-18 Denmark will be the host of the 15th Conference of Parties. The focus of the negotiations in Copenhagen will be the need to agree upon a new fair, ambitious and global agreement on climate change.

It took nearly eight years to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, and the Copenhagen conference represents almost the last chance to agree on a new agreement if it is

to be approved and ratified prior to the expiry of the binding commitments in the Kyoto Protocol in 2012.

In 2007, at the climate change conference in Bali, all countries agreed to the Bali Action Plan with the objective of an agreed outcome in Copenhagen in 2009. The action plan set out the structure of a future agreement with a long-term shared vision and four building blocks for a new agreement -- technology, finance, mitigation and adaptation.

It is the ambition that a new global climate change agreement, like the Kyoto Protocol today, will regulate the generated part of global greenhouse gas emissions in order to curb global warming. The negative effects of climate change are felt all over the world, with heavy rainfalls, devastating storms and increasing droughts.

Global warming is threatening the habitats of plants and animals, pressuring food production and melting the ice caps in Greenland and the Arctic, causing sea level to rise. The temperature rise is caused by increased amounts of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, not least CO₂, which is mainly related to human use of fossil fuels such as coal and oil. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the damage caused by global warming will be irreversible if CO₂ emissions are not reduced within the next ten years.

Denmark hosts COP15

COP15 will be hosted in the Danish capital Copenhagen from December 7 to December 18. Denmark takes its role as host for COP15 very seriously. "To host such an event is a great honour. Denmark takes on this task humbly and well aware

that no matter how hard we try, we have no guarantee for success. We will work for an ambitious result. But by disagreeing, one country can make the whole thing tumble. As hosts, we, therefore, have special obligations. We must listen and mediate in order to make sure that we reach an agreement and that all countries are on board, says Connie Hedegaard, Danish Minister for Climate.

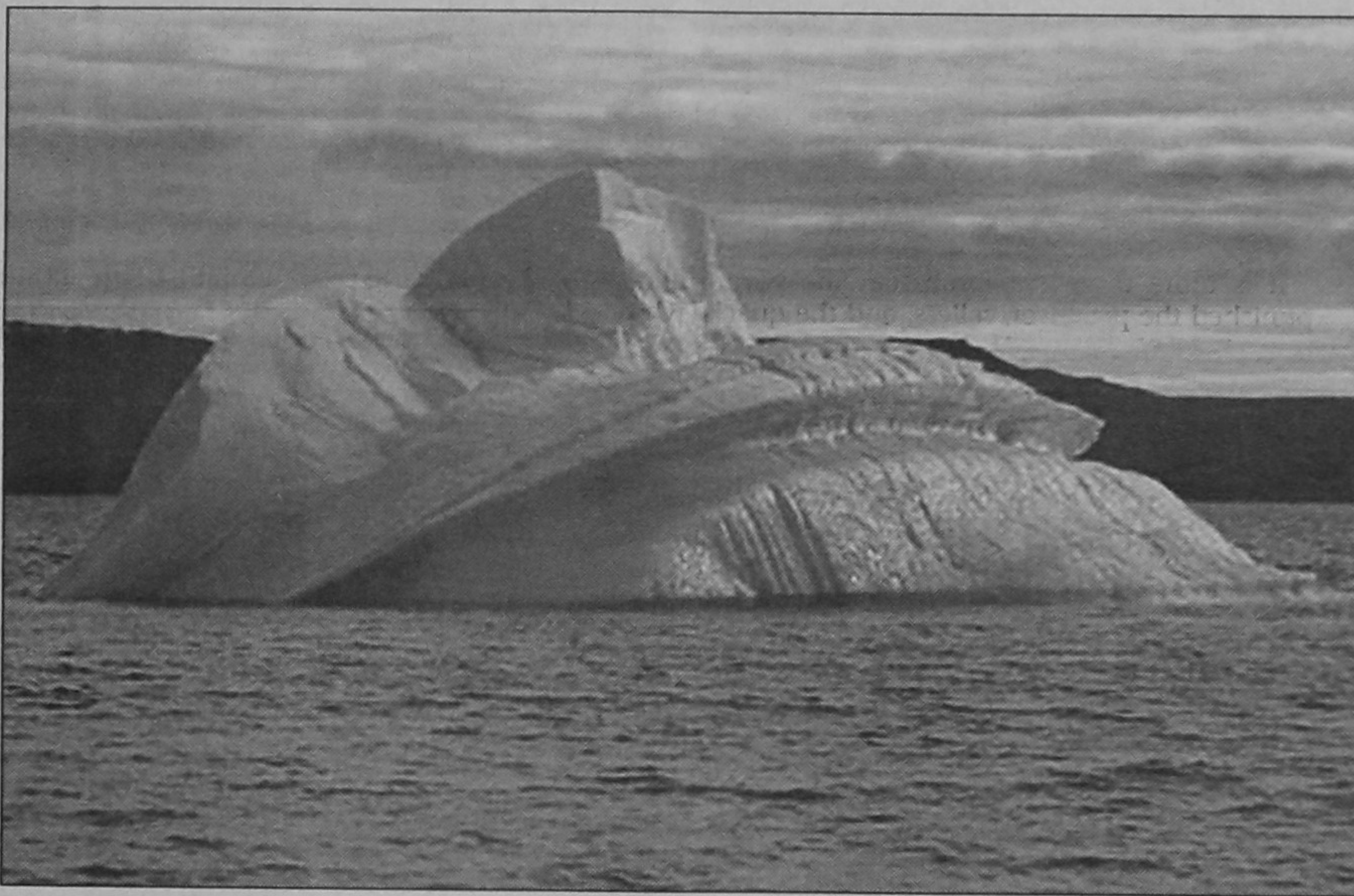
The goal of the conference is to enter into a binding global climate change agreement, which will follow the Kyoto Protocol, when its first commitment period expires in 2012. COP15 will be one of the biggest UN conferences ever held outside New York and Geneva, with an estimated attendance of between 12,000 to 15,000 delegates, including NGOs and journalists. The Conference will take place in "Bella Center." A number of related events will be hosted in and around Copenhagen in the period up to and during COP15, all aimed at creating support for a new global climate deal and drawing attention to the fight against climate change.

The Danish example -- towards an energy efficient and climate friendly economy

A central argument for resisting binding targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions is concern for economic growth. However, experience from Denmark shows that with a persistent and active energy policy focused on increasing energy efficiency it is possible to maintain high economic growth, while at the same time reducing the dependency on fossil fuels and protecting the environment.

Denmark's energy efficiency is today among the highest in the EU, and continues to rise each year. The country has one of the most efficient uses of energy and a low level of CO₂-emission in relation to production levels, compared to other EU and OECD countries. Since 1980, Denmark's economy has grown by 78%, alongside nearly stable energy consumption and reduced CO₂ emissions.

The country's sustainable growth has been created by a combination of invest-



Bangladesh must speak out at COP15.

ments in technological development, green taxes and a political effort to promote the use of renewable energy. Since the 1970s Denmark has seen major investments and research into alternative energy sources, especially wind, and efficiency improvements of existing power stations.

Today, renewable energy comprises 19% of overall energy consumption. This has increased energy supply security and contributed significantly to the attainment of Denmark's climate targets. From 1990 to 2007, economic activity in Denmark increased by more than 45%, while CO₂ emissions decreased by more than 13%.

Copenhagen

The Danish capital has preserved its old-world charm of cobbled streets and historic buildings, whilst becoming a distinctly modern city with trendy cafes and plenty of green spaces. The city is a good

showcase of Denmark's sustainable approach, as it is the first in the world so far to put Agenda 21 into practice. Agenda 21 is a program launched at the 1992 UN conference in Rio to promote sustainable development globally and locally.

The overall goal of the strategy is to make the city the world's eco-metropolis by 2015, by striving for human, cultural, and economic development to meet sustainability criteria. The strategy focuses on putting global thinking into local action and covers a wide range of initiatives, including cleaner air, cleaner water and healthier food, less traffic noise, better use of resources, more green areas, and greater biodiversity.

So far, Copenhagen municipality has made the harbour clean enough to swim in, and has introduced one of the best waste handling systems in the world. Almost 90% of all construction waste is recycled and 75% of all household refuse is incinerated. The energy resulting from

the incineration is used for district heating and electricity.

Copenhagen is also famous for its bicycling population, as a staggering 36% of inhabitants rely on bicycles as their main means of transport. The city plans to increase the number of bicyclists to 50% by 2015, through a doubling of spending on bicycle lanes and bicycle stands and other initiatives. When it comes to food, Copenhageners also figure amongst the most environmentally conscious in the world. 51% of food consumption in public institutions and a world record of 23% of private food consumption are organic.

The official COP15 website www.cop15.dk is available in seven languages and provides daily updates on COP15 and the climate change issues in general.

His Excellency Einar Hebogard Jensen is Ambassador of Denmark to Bangladesh.

Dead Man Working



HOW to tell when you have reached the end of the road? Joblessness in the US has just hit a 25-year high, according to the newspapers. (Victims include this columnist's brother.) This is bad news for all of us.

The rest of the world's population is worried. This is because we admire the US as "the land of the free." Oh, okay, let's be brutally honest, we admire the US as "the mother lode of totally indiscrimi-

nating customers."

The result is that our jobs will be lost too.

Dead wood goes first. A woman I know picked up a newspaper and chuckled over a job ad. "Look at this," she laughed. "The department must be expanding. They're looking for someone with the same skills as me."

When no one smiled, she realised it was her job, which was up for grabs.

A bit smarter was a guy I knew realised he wasn't in favour when his boss kept calling him Dave despite the fact his name was Michael.

And then suddenly the bosses started getting his name correct.

And they knew his wife's name. And his kids' names.

There could only be one reason for this. They had pulled his file to have a look at it.

When a colleague quietly advised him not to buy a new apartment, he knew the end had come.

In the previous column, we talked about sins that you may commit which are likely to get you on the "downsizing" list.

Today, we examine the condition known as Dead Man Working. You are in this state during the period (usually three to five days) between the boss issuing orders for you to be sacked, and the human resources guy completing all the paperwork.

Here are the signs.

1. Your get to work to find that your car

park space has been reassigned to the office boy. And he doesn't even have a car.

2. As soon as you enter your workplace, the buzz of chatter disappears and everyone goes silently to their desks to start work. (Know the feeling?)

3. When you approach your cubicle, you find the guy below you is measuring your desk and trying out your seat.

4. Your bosses start exchanging comments with you only by written memo copied in triplicate, even when they're just saying, "Morning." (I've had bosses communicate by fax even when they are a few meters from me.)

5. The company website has been redited to refer to you in the past tense: "The project leader at the time was your

name here."

6. Your secretary responds to your orders by continuing to read her magazine and saying, "Yeah, yeah, whatever."

7. You look at the company performance chart and notice that the peak day for profit/ productivity was the day that you joined.

8. You are asked to give urgent training to your new "assistant." Your departure is particularly close if you are given less responsibility than the intern, especially if you are the chief financial officer, and she is still in school uniform.

9. At lunchtime in the office canteen, no one will share your table, even if it means they have to eat standing up.

10. The phone sanitizer skips your cubicle, realising that she can do it when

you're gone.

The final minutes of your life with the company have arrived when you get a call inviting you to an unexpected meeting in the conference room with your boss.

You stand up.

You look over the cubicle wall into the conference room.

You see your boss there, looking grumpy and rubbing his sweaty palms.

Bad sign: The boss is accompanied by the human resources director.

Worse sign: The company lawyer is with him.

Worst sign of all: So are the security guards.

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