

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.

## A great scientist

The world lost one of the 20th century's true heroes last Saturday with the death, at 93, of agricultural visionary Norman Borlaug - a seed scientist who forcefully closed the gap between theory and practice, Borlaug is widely and justly known as "the father of the Green Revolution." His work increased crop yields in Asia and elsewhere at a time when population growth was outstripping world food production. Nobody denies that Borlaug's work saved hundreds of millions of lives.

Borlaug was more than a white-coated ivory-tower theorist. A farm boy from Iowa, he realized early that the improved grain varieties he had developed would make subsistence farmers wary. So he and others hand-delivered his seeds to small farmers, in India and elsewhere. Aided by the Indian government - the farm minister dug up his personal cricket pitch to be a demonstration site - Borlaug got the word out across India by the mid-1960s. Yields began to rise, farmers became enthusiastic, and India's wheat crop grew by 41 per cent in two years. In 1970, Borlaug was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

But even such a blessing as more abundant food has its nay-sayers. Critics complain that the green revolution uses too much water and fertilizer, has encouraged monocultures, and has helped some farmers more than others.



To which common sense can reply only "What part of 'saved hundreds of millions of lives' do you not understand?" The same question can be put to those who object to new agricultural advances, notably the genetic modification of foodstuffs, an innovation Borlaug supported.

In South Asia, and elsewhere, conditions were right for Norman Borlaug to solve a problem for humanity, and he did so with spectacular success. We need more like him.

Avik Sengupta

McGill University, Montreal, Canada

coming from abroad are warned by their respective missions in Bangladesh not to drink Dhaka water as a precaution against sickness. The volume of water supplied was much more than what was required compared to today's scanty supply of water and the people were not forced to demonstrate with empty pitchers for water in the streets of Dhaka. It used to take only 10 minutes to cover the distance by a car, which now takes 2 hours or even more. In the 1960's double decker buses were introduced on the streets of Dhaka.

While a student of Shaheen School, quite often I used to take a fun ride back home on those double decker buses for only 10 paise.

Many of us must have forgotten by now that there used to be a race course at the Suhrawardy Udyan and the people used to enjoy horse race during their leisure time. It is now a story of the by-gone days.

The King of the jungle and his cohorts are parading the streets of Dhaka on million dollar vehicles without being concerned about the inevitable.

Saleh Ayub

One-mail

### Trucks or tormentors?

Heavily loaded trucks plying throughout the night has become a headache for the residents of the road from Sutrapur to Postagola, one of the busiest thoroughfares in the city.

The Sutrapur to Postagola is the only road for Karimullah Beg, RCN Gate, IG Gate, Faridabad and Milbarak areas. There are four high schools, three primary schools, three colonies, police lines and barracks and Anjuman Mofidul Islam office in the area.

Millions of people use this road every day. Most of the time this road remains under repair and the average width of the road is only 15 feet.

Heavily loaded trucks use this road the whole day and their number increases after 6:00 or 7:00pm creating unbearable noise and traffic jam. They use this road to avoid traffic police in Jurain and Jatrabari road.

It is tough to cross the road during the day. At night crossing the road becomes almost impossible. It is also not possible for the residents to sleep.

In addition, Anjuman Mofidul Islam, a charity organization which has an ambulance service for the patients, cannot operate smoothly due to the jam. There is no traffic police here, especially from the evening. In this situation, people of this area - victims of traffic jam and unbearable noise - have appealed to the authorities concerned to solve the problem.

Most of the residents of the area feel that if the movement of heavy vehicles on the road is stopped, the problem will be solved. If this is not possible, the authorities can set up pole bars at a specific height on the road, especially near Gandaria telephone exchange, so that trucks and other heavy vehicles cannot use the road.

Mohammed Hossain

Dhaka

### Jamming the wheels

O dear! Life has been glued to the bituminous surface of Dhaka? Not really they are dancing along the road a waltz, or at times samba or hip hop.

I hope some one will rename this street dance as Dhaka Waltz. The month of Ramadan has witnessed the terrible gridlocks in the city. So gruelling and so frustrating. The working hours, the waiting hours drained at these standstills are never measured. So pathetic for the nation that all have become numb, dumb and deaf.

In recent times one positive thing has transpired. Our national flag has been found in many of the wheel logging. They cannot be given special mileage either!

And my camera within the mobile phone set went click, click. The flag posted cars are not spared either. At least those people inside the privileged cars are aware of this disturbing feat. Long hours inside the car can cause so much mental and physical handicaps. I am thinking dehydration, inhalation of toxic gases, dizziness plus the mental agony. At times you try to shout at your neighbour or scold the vendor trying to sell you the most idiotic items. Are we considering the high cost the nation will be requiring to handle all these ailments. We better do that otherwise we will miss all our pledges for a better off nation. We don't want to become "The Wheels Waltz."

Ashfaq Ahmed

Paribagh Road

Dhaka

### Commerce minister and TCB

Soon after taking over as commerce minister, Faruk Khan issued confusing statements about the role of TCB. He said TCB would have no role in the market and after a few days he stated that it would have a role! Probably, he intended to appease the businessmen with this statement. It is now apparent that this did not work since the price of sugar is now Tk 70 per kg!

Here TCB could have flooded the market with sugar and other essential items well before Ramadan. I hope the government will realise its mistake.

Farah Khan

Gulshan, Dhaka

### Law secretary

Possibly every local daily, English or Bangla, published on September 14, the statement of the law secretary that he was responsible for unlawful sacking of the two judges.

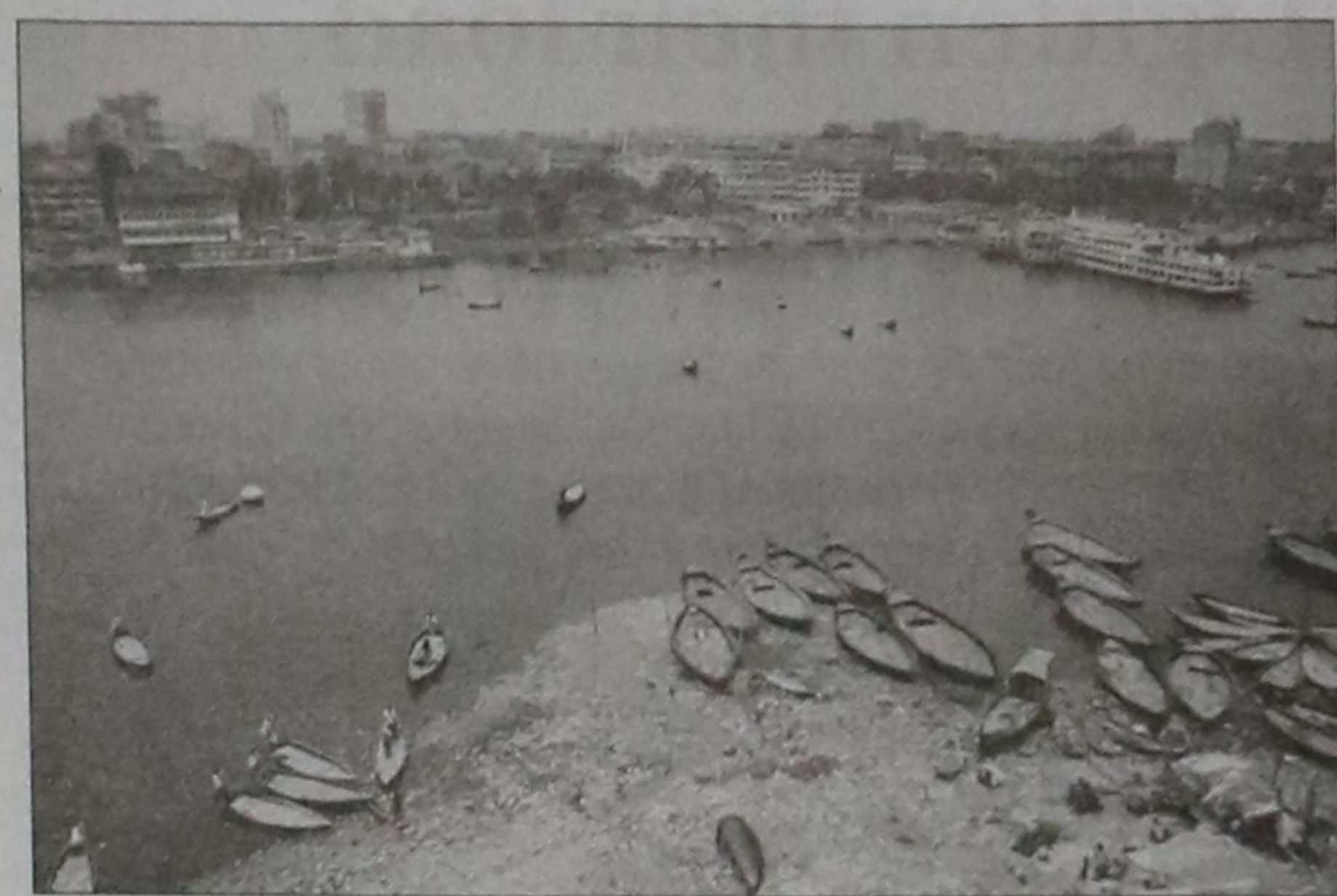
Can one imagine that the law secretary is unaware of the law and rules and regulations concerning disciplinary S.A. Mansoor

Dhaka

### Deed writers

The hand writing of the quack deed writers was a problem for the people in the past. The quacks don't have enough knowledge of land laws. Also, they do not know the latest rules and regulations of land registration system, but they

## Rivers



The rivers of Bangladesh basically mark both the physiography of the nation and the life of the people. Nearly 700 in number, these rivers generally flow south. The larger rivers serve as the main source of water for cultivation and as the principal arteries of commercial transportation. Rivers also provide fish, an important source of protein. Flooding of the rivers during the monsoon season causes enormous hardship and hinders

development, but fresh deposits of rich silt replenish the fertile but overworked soil. The rivers also drain excess monsoon rainfall into the Bay of Bengal. Thus, the great river system is at the same time the country's principal resource and its greatest hazard.

Shohag Mostafij

MBA, Stream-Strategic & International Management (SIM) University of Dhaka

### Dowry

The custom of giving and accepting dowry is mostly found in the rural parts of Bangladesh. Here, some families demand dowry based on the money spent for rearing up a bridegroom!

Frequent quarrels over outstanding dowry often lead to breakdown of husband-wife relationships. Frequent physical oppression on dowry defaulters often leads to premature death of young women.

Educate people on the ill effects of dowry. Sukumar Sarker (Shaun) Territory Officer Nestle Bangladesh Ltd

### Nijhum Dwip deer

My previous letter on the subject was a knee-jerk and totally sentimental reaction on the proliferation of the Nijhum Deer, given my life-long concern for our forests and wildlife. Dr Reza Khan has done an admirable job (DS 12 Sept) in putting the issue in its correct perspective given the present conditions, while mine were at least 40-50 years old. Actually I was influenced by a recent documentary in the National Geographic which depicted a South African couple who reared a pair of tiger cubs on their sprawling farm, cared for them, trained them to hunt and within 2-3 years gradually released them into the wild. Five years later they were flourishing with a family. Imagine wild Bengal tigers in Africa, when this magnificent creature faces decimation in its own homeland!!

Since one cannot depend on the Forest Dept for such dedication (DS headline of 30,000 trees plundered on the Cox's Bazar shoreline only reinforces that view), we must look to other means to rear

this God-sent boon for the mutual benefit of all, especially the deer. Therefore, Dr Reza's options of 1) Restricted hunting and 2) selective culling periodically are perhaps, the best. Briefly, we can follow the policy of Kenya with regard to hunting of only male antlered deer. Only foreign tourists paying in FE are eligible. Prices are steep because they have organized the whole wildlife tourism into a flourishing industry that now nets them as much as we earn from our garments export. My son who stays there, has taken us on many safaris to some of the more accessible Parks like Tsavo East and West, Amboseli, Rift Valley and the shoreline resorts and parks that line the 70 mile stretch from Mombasa to Malindi. What a pity that we cannot replicate what the Kenyans have done, in spite of having better natural spectacles, beauty, possibilities and infrastructure. Declare Nijhum Dwip as a Protected National Park as a first step, but before anything else, get the Forest Dept out of there.

Secondly, we should go for selective culling of a number of deer every year, that can be sold as fresh meat or canned. A small processing unit would pay rich dividends and I am sure the giant local processors like, PRAN, ACI, Square, RahimAfroz etc would take it up as a CSR project even if there is loss initially. Export earnings from venison, skin, antlers, bones, fat etc are also nothing to be sneezed at.

With regard to neutering the deer, I am against it. Why should the deer suffer for the follies and foibles of the human race. Let THEM be neutered and save the planet for the wildlife.

Sikander Ahmed

Niketon, Gulshan-1, Dhaka

### The city we had

The difference between the two is heaven and earth. About 80% of the city dwellers do not have any idea about the provincial capital Dhaka. Months ago I came back to Dhaka from Houston, Texas. It is said that Sugarland is heaven on earth. I do not think it will be out of place to mention Sugarland is what Dhaka used to be 40 years ago. Dhaka has gone back many years behind Dhaka. The decline began 40 years ago and is still on.

There is a road between Shahbagh and Jahangir Gate used to be known as Airport Road. There was a Fountain at Shahbagh and the road divider was full of Flame Trees (Kishinichurās). During full bloom it looked magnificent. All most all the roads in Sugarland, Texas, reminds me of those lost days. There was a big tree in front of the Farm Gate Police Box, a lost sight to behold. The invading Pakistani Army chopped down the tree making it easy for the commercial entrepreneurs to build their high-rise buildings.

The Ganny's Departmental opposite GPO reminds me of all the big chain stores in the United States. Volume-wise it is not even a portion of Walmart or Sams Club but the concept was the same. There was a big water body where now stands Basundhara Shopping Complex resulting in flooding with a little rain. Not only this, all most all the ponds and canals have been filled to construct high rise buildings and apartments causing immense sufferings to the city dwellers.

The water supplied by Dhaka Wassa used to be one of the best source of drinking water in the world, now it is exactly the opposite. People

## Volleying back....

Readers' instant comments on The Daily Star Online reports. Log on to thedailystar.net to leave your comments.

### Rajuk fills up Shitalakhya bank for housing scheme (September 17, 2009)

Can't believe this. It is a shame for Bangladesh. Duranta

Rajuk should clearly know if this is right or wrong. It is their job and duty. Since the issue has come to limelight, the government should go through the matter again. If it is overlooked or the government fails to take the right decision quickly, matters would go beyond control. Afreen

The government should be ashamed of giving permission to fill up the river. Mohammed Ibrahim

Thanks to The Daily Star for this very useful report. Rajuk must stop this project immediately. It

must show the way. We expect that all these kinds of works, which harm our rivers, will not proceed any further. Saleque Sufi

No doubt, there is acute shortage of residential land in Dhaka city. Rajuk has taken the initiative to solve this problem, but they have taken a wrong decision. Wasim

The government should either restore the filled up portion to its previous state or approve all the illegal development (?) projects in natural wetlands/rivers owned by private developers. WDB and BIWTA should act impartially against all types of encroachments. Saif Iqbal

Whatever we say, the last bit is - this is Bangladesh and anything is possible or everything is impossible here!! Durmukh

Now the question is how can one enforce the law effectively, if he himself does not respect the law? Azmeri

The government approved the project of Rajuk which violates environmental laws. How could it be possible? When protector becomes the grabber, what can we say? It's the best example of our government's failure. Sharif Hosen

This is nothing new for Rajuk. Never ever DIT/Rajuk had any plans whatsoever for improve-

ment of the capital. The ultimate goal of the Rajuk officials and employees is to grab lands for themselves.

The Daily Star would do well to give up the fight against the monsters - Rajuk, politicians, mastans, and high-ups. I don't see any hope for this unfortunate nation. Dr M M Mortayez Amin

Rajuk is playing a double standard game. It is filling wet and low land to turn them into high land plots, but at the same time it is preventing other private organisations from doing so. Hassan Reza Saeed

Our politicians always think of gobbling up something. They were sleeping when the river was being grabbed. Baz

## DSE's dubious move

A few days ago DSE decided not to allow any private company to offload their shares through direct listing method with the reasons not explained. The move is dubious. Through direct listing the companies with good market image and healthy books of accounts can be benefited for their goodwill. This method also denies the wrongdoings of the gamblers in the guise of so called investors. Why should the DSE want these monsters to eat away the premium of the goodwill the companies have created through dili-

gence and endeavour of their skilled workforce. A good financial analyst with acumen can see the prowling gamblers in the trading floors of the stock exchanges.

So, we earnestly request the DSE authorities to help the companies with market reputation through their participation in the capital market and devise policies in the interest of the genuine investors.

Syed Muhammed Azim

Ferozshah Colony

Pahartali, Chittagong

