

If we fail to limit dangerous climate change ...

Bangladesh, and other countries in South Asia, will be vulnerable to sea level rises endangering over 100 million people as well as declining yields of staple crops such as maize, wheat and soya bean.

DUNCAN NORMAN

WITH just 45 days to go before the UN climate change summit in Copenhagen, the negotiations still hang in the balance. The UK has a strong interest in securing an ambitious global agreement. This is an issue that affects the future security and prosperity of our countries.

On October 22, David Miliband, the UK foreign secretary, and Ed Miliband, the UK secretary of state for energy and climate change, publicly released a world map developed by the UK Met Office Hadley Centre, showing some of the impacts that may occur if the global average temperature rises by 4 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial climate average. The map has involved senior scientists from the Met Office and builds on the UN Intergovernmental Panel on

Climate Change (IPCC)'s Fourth Assessment Report. But it also incorporates the most recent scientific findings to represent the latest information we have on climate impacts at 4 degrees.

The map shows significant temperature rises on land, with the hottest days of the year in many highly populated areas being between 6 and 12 degrees C, higher than they are now. It examines the impacts on agricultural production, with potentially hundreds of millions more people at risk from hunger. It tells us that climate change could lead to a situation later this century where more than a third of the global population is living in areas with limited availability of water.

What are the implications for the UK and Bangladesh? Agricultural yields are expected to decrease for all major cereal crops in all major regions of production. In Europe, we will suffer the effects of

increased water scarcity, more frequent and intense droughts and forest fires. Bangladesh, and other countries in South Asia, will be vulnerable to sea level rises endangering over 100 million people as well as declining yields of staple crops such as maize, wheat and soya bean. Tropical storms like the recent one that devastated the Philippines will increase in both frequency and intensity. More than half of all Himalayan glaciers will be significantly reduced by 2050.

Climate change is already affecting lives and livelihoods in Bangladesh, with devastating impact. By 2050, 70 million people could be affected annually by floods and 8 million by drought, with increasingly intense cyclones hitting the coast. The UK government, through the Department for International Development (DFID), is already investing approximately £200 million over the next five years to help six million extremely poor people improve their livelihoods and access to food. These include some of the poorest and most vulnerable groups living on chars in the flood plains and coastal areas, as well as slum and street dwellers in towns and cities.

In line with our White Paper commit-

ments, we are also providing £75 million to support Bangladesh's national climate change strategy. This will help to renovate embankments and shelters; enhance the early warning systems for flood and cyclone; promote climate resilient crops and livelihoods; build national as well as community-based preparedness for natural disasters; improve access to safe drinking water and sanitation in vulnerable communities; and conduct action research on adaptation to climate change. But more global action is required now. The map shows why this is a matter of immediate importance to all of us. The geopolitical implications of the physical, economic and human impacts would be far-reaching and transformational. Climate change will increasingly affect all of our policy decisions, changing not just the physical landscape but the political context and choices we have to work with.

This is why the UK Government is aiming for an agreement at Copenhagen that limits emissions to achieve a rise of no more than 2 degrees Celsius. If we fail to deliver an ambitious agreement at Copenhagen then we are looking at the prospect of the temperature increasing by 4 degrees



The warning bells are ringing.

during the course of this century. And that will have a potentially devastating impact, threatening our access to essential resources, our infrastructure, our social and economic stability and

our very way of life.
(To find the map, go to: www.actoncopenhagen.decc.gov.uk/en)
Duncan Norman is Acting British High Commissioner.

Road safety and traffic congestion

Promoting road safety is vital for enabling discipline and safety in the road transport sector. Every year, thousands of people are killed in road accidents. The losses incurred in road accidents are now a serious burden on the economy. Statistics show that 3,749 fatal accidents occurred in 2007.

MD. REZAUL KARIM

NO positive initiative undertaken by the government for reducing traffic congestion in Dhaka city will work unless there is an effective policy to control the number and types of vehicles. The city welcomes 48 thousand motor vehicles a year through Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA). Only 3% of them are buses and 89% are private vehicles, which means that 97% of road capacity is occupied by private and small vehicles. Unfortunately, the policy makers, transport experts, civil society members and transport operators hardly talk about this. If the current trend continues, the traffic system in big cities will go beyond control.

Promoting road safety is vital for enabling discipline and safety in the road transport sector. Every year, thousands of people are killed in road accidents. The losses incurred in road accidents are now a serious burden on the economy. Statistics show that 3,749 fatal accidents occurred in 2007. TIB's diagnostic study (March 22) conducted on 676 respondents (366 vehicle drivers and 310 owners) reveals that only 19% of the accidents were reported to the police. Another study (Transport Research Laboratory, 2004) also revealed similar incidents of underreporting. Road accidents cost the nation between Tk.700 and Tk.2,400 crore per year, and they affect mainly poor families (BRTA, 2005-07).

Empirical evidence shows that the target to reduce the number of road accidents by 10% lower set in the National Road Safety Strategic Action Plan of 2007-08, but BRTA was not allocated funds, personnel and logistic

support to implement it. The Road Safety Cell of BRTA as not functioned for years due to lack of fund allocation. The issuing of vehicle related documents and driving licenses to unfit vehicles and drivers has not only endangered safety on the roads but has also created a scope for a section of traffic police to take bribes.

Despite being a money earning institution (earned Tk.489 crores in 2007-08) BRTA's role with regard to efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and integrity has been a matter of widespread debate, but nothing is done for unearthing the root-causes and establishing order in transport. This is an attempt to reveal these gaps.

Structural challenges:

- On average BRTA issues 188 vehicle registrations everyday in an unplanned and indiscriminate way;
- School curricula do not include road safety lessons for students. There is also absence of public awareness campaigns on road safety;
- Absence of planning, policy decisions and guidelines to control the number of motor and non-motor vehicles in metropolitan areas;
- Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1983 was meant to regulate traffic but applies to motor vehicles only;
- Dhaka Metropolitan Police Ordinance 1976 has minor provisions against NMVs, regulation not framed for traffic control, not preferred because maximum fine taka 10 only
- Absence of orientation on road safety management issues and lack of incentives for the members of Regional Transport Committee (RTC), Dhaka Transport Coordination Boards, Driving



Going nowhere.

Competency Testing Board (DCTB), RHD, LGED, City Corporations and road safety committees at national, district and upazilla levels;

- DTCB, which is very vital for management of Dhaka transport, has not been made effective. It is believed that DTCB was taken under control of mayor of Dhaka City Corporation in 2005 chiefly to ensure making money from the DTCB's road projects.

Institutional challenges:

- BRTA is institutionally capable enough to act as a regulatory body, but its manpower has not increased in the last 20 years. Now BRTA cannot execute its functions;
- Control over vehicles, including operation of mobile courts, becomes difficult due to lack of sufficient and trained manpower, logistics and vehicles;
- Vehicle fitness and driving test are hampered due to lack of space and apparatus;
- More than 90% of BRTA's man-hours are mostly devoted to client services.

As a result, vehicle control and road safety matters are almost ignored;

- Road transport trade unions and transport terminal committees remain under control of political influence due to absence of accountability and integrity in BRTA;
- Lack of coordination among various service providing government institutions, e.g. BRTA, DTCB, RHD, DCC, Police, Wasa, BTCL etc.

Enforcement by traffic police:

- 74% traffic police have no power of prosecution;
- Traffic police not empowered to investigate accident cases;
- Traffic Control and Public Vehicle Bye-laws 1973: main law for NMV administered by DCC, no power given to traffic police;
- Lack of necessary equipment, i.e. speed gun, breath analyser and vehicles for traffic police;
- Further, the government has approved increased manpower (2,042) for highway police but allocation of money has not been yet included in the revenue budget

Challenges related to transport associations:

- Vehicle operators and associations stay outside of transparency and accountability;
- There is no audit system to check how the money from transport associations is spent;
- There are no effective laws and mechanisms to confirm the rights (appointment letter, monthly salary-benefit and ensuring security of job by the employers) of the professional drivers.

Recommendations:

Policy level:

- There must be a policy for motor vehicles in cities areas, specially for Dhaka, to determine the number and types of motor vehicle, and appropriate implementation must be ensured;
- More lessons on road safety should be included in national education curricula;
- Funds should be allocated for carrying out road safety awareness campaigns by BRTA, or by NGOs working at grassroots level;
- The Motor Vehicle Ordinance-1983, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Ordinance 1976 and Traffic Control and Public Vehicle Bye-laws 1973 should be reviewed and updated;
- Punishment described in the Motor Vehicle Ordinance should be stringent and implemented effectively;
- Police surveillance and BRTA-run mobile courts should be increased, and operate on regular basis;
- The community should be involved to compensate for limited traffic police resources;
- Public-private sector partnership may be developed;
- Departmental disciplinary actions along with stern punitive measures should be taken against the employees who issue driving licenses to unfit drivers and certificates for unfit vehicles;
- DTCB must be strengthened institutionally, and kept away from the influence of Dhaka City Corporation;
- Professionals having experience in road transport systems should be

included in RSC, RTC and DCTB

Institutional:

- Regular Coordination should be maintained among the various service providing govt. institution e.g. BRTA, DTCB, RHD, DCC, Police, WASA, BTCL etc;
- Road Safety Cell of BRTA should be brought under revenue budget. Adequate manpower, finance and logistics should be ensured for the RSC;
- BRTA should be equipped with adequate human resource (magistrates) and logistics to ensure regular monitoring of vehicles;
- Driving test and fitness of vehicles may be outsourced to capable and credible institutions;
- Measures should be taken for reporting of all accidents to the police.

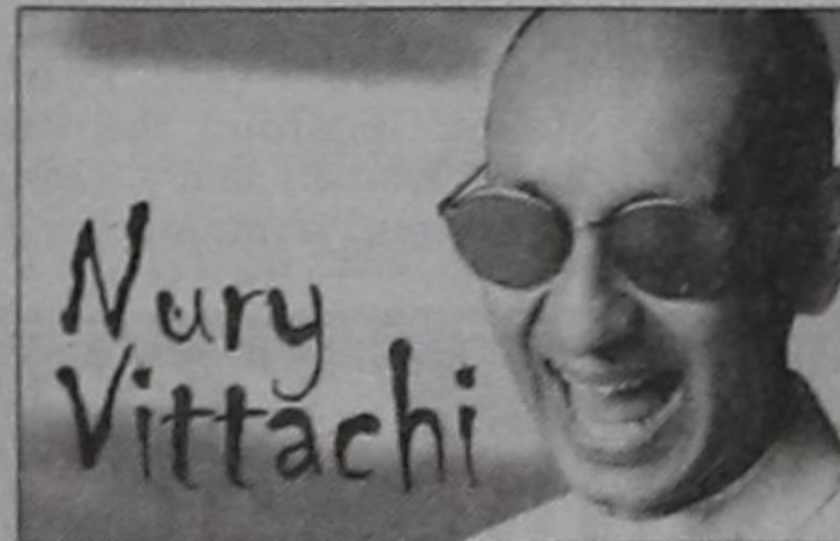
Accountability and integrity of transport operators and associations:

- Labour, trade union and transport operators acts must be updated to ensure democratic election of transport association leaders, and their accountability and integrity;
- Minimum qualification of a leader in the transport sector must be ensured;
- The communication and labour ministries should take initiatives to make legal provisions for determining the leadership of transport organisations through secret voting;
- An effective and credible entity may be established to ensure proper operation of transport operators.

The government should make a policy to manage, regulate and control the number and type of motor vehicle in mega cities with immediate effect. Finally, effective measures initiated by the ministry of communications can strengthen the effectiveness of BRTA, DTCB, road traffic agencies and other stakeholders in the road transport system, thereby promoting road safety in Bangladesh. We expect that the present government will address the challenges and remedies mentioned above with due emphasis.

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Super tutor is here



NURY VITTACHI

HE'S young. He's handsome. His face is on billboards and buses all over town. He earns a fortune. Teenagers worship him. He is... a math teacher.

Anyone who thinks there are hardly any differences left between East and West should check out the education scene.

In the nightmare school I barely survived in the UK, teachers were paid in table scraps and got chairs thrown at them. Now I live in Asia, where teachers are superstars who live in luxury.

The phenomenon of the rock star teacher started in China in the 1990s with a man who added two things to his after-school cramming class that had never been seen before in Asian education:

- Fun and
- A money-back guarantee.

He was soon standing on stage in front of massive audiences of cheering youngsters doing English conversation classes. Teacher: "Let us speak English, the language of Shakespeare and his even more famous descendent Brittany Spears."

Huge audience: "Yes we will!"

Teacher: "Let us willingly pay huge fees for this honour."

Huge audience: "Yes we will!"

Teacher: You will never forget what I teach you, will you?"

Huge audience: "Yes we will!"

The phenomenon spread around Asia, and now many cities have superstar teachers offering classes from science to math. But in some places, particularly in South Asia and Indo-China, parents still

help children get exam passes with traditional methods, such as bribery, corruption or just turning up at school with a big stick. These methods don't work at my kids' schools, unfortunately.

Yet I was reluctant to send them to a new-style cramming school. Did I really want to finance a new swimming pool for a brattish rock star tutor who already earns more than I do?

So instead, I gave the kids a lengthy lecture about how if they worked hard at their studies they would eventually be rewarded with a job and an income.

"In ten years, you will have your own money and buy whatever you like, whenever you like."

They considered this. "Can you give us the cash in advance, Dad?" If there were exams in "answering back", my son would get an "A star" grade.

In the end, my wife found an after-school tutoring centre which seemed efficient, well run and honest, and signed up the children for top-up classes. They went reluctantly the first week, uncom-

plainingly the second week and enthusiastically the third week. "Can I do more subjects next term?" one child asked me. "Can I go every day after school?"

Huh? Was she really asking for extra homework? This was suspicious. I decided this needed investigating.

At the after-school tutorial centre, I found a toyshop - but none of the things it could be bought for cash. They could only be bought with tutorial points. Put in long hours of study, and you can buy real stuff at the end of each session. Some of the gear in the shop was really cool, and the "instant gratification" way of getting it for a few sessions of study was irresistible.

I'm signing up for classes myself next term. I've decided I need to practice speaking English, the language of Shakespeare and his even more famous descendent Brittany Spears.

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