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Forests and bandits



SHEKH HASANI / DRINKNEWS

It is now an open secret that poaching of deer has become a day to day business of some goons of the Sundarbans area. Who are they, where do they live, what is their source of protection, everybody in the local area knows it all. Thanks to the reporter and The Daily Star for unfurling the story on the poaching, though partial, yet. (The Daily Star: 04.11.09)

But who will take action against them? If you want to get venison or hide you need not go into the jungle, just ask the villagers near the Sundarbans, they will tell you the names who can arrange it for you in lieu of money. Having the familiarity of their mischief they are doing brisk business in public. There are even groups who used to go to the Sundarbans or arrange hunting on frequent schedule to poach deer, its skin and venison.

The groups of dacoits who live inside the forests are also big killers of deer. I

would like to request you to run a story on the people who are a great threat to the local wood cutters (locally called Bawalis), honey collectors and fishermen. The thugs live inside the forest, extort the bawalis and collect ransom frequently from abductions, and kill deer for their sustenance.

But ask the law enforcing agencies including the forest officials they will pretend that they know nothing of the offence or the offenders.

Actually, lawlessness in and around the Sundarbans are mainly responsible for the poaching while the staff and officials of the forests fan the offence for their own gains. It's a profitable regular business of some people run with the help of some local goons and political elements. The reporter should unearth the full story which is more horrendous than even a fiction.

Monzur Rahman
Dhaka

Garment workers

The incident that occurred at Nippon Garment Industries Ltd. in Tongi takes us back to the lane of memories. How many times will we passively or reluctantly watch on the TV screen or read the news articles about such horrible incidents? Questions may arise about the desired role of BGMEA regarding the monitoring function of garment industries. It may also seem that either the government is reluctant to tackle such occurrences or its hands are tied. But the victims are always the poorest people who lose their lives. Have we ever thought that these garment workers' hands bring foreign exchange to our national economy?

The indiscriminate loss of poor lives at garment factories cannot continue any longer. The government should take immediate stern action to bring the wrongdoers to justice. Let the poor people live peacefully.

Harun Ur Rashid
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Institute of Social Welfare and Research (ISWR)
University of Dhaka

What are they up to?

On Friday last, in a religious programme of a television channel, a madrasa educated Moulana was discussing some religious matters. At one stage, he shifted to the newly formulated education policy and gave a calumnious explanation of secular education. He even professed that the country will face heavenly 'Gazab' if such educational policies are implemented. Other channels also telecast equally motivated views on various topics. Most of such talks are personal/political/debatable views intended to lead or mislead the general people. The authorities, both private and government, may look into the matter.

Many people do not know much about the political bias of the channels and may trust them in good faith.

M. Sanaul Haq
One-mail

Death

I think it is known to many that Cryonics is an organization seeking to provide immortality to its investors. The way the fortunate people are seeking to prevent death contravenes principles of Islam. If Cryonics opens an office here, there won't be any dearth of finance as there are many willing and capable people in Bangladesh.

Unfortunately, one can not escape death, according to Islam all living beings shall have the taste of death. A Muslim ceases to be a Muslim if he or she does not believe in death and Resurrection in the hereafter. A person shall die the way he or she is destined to.

We all should pray to the Almighty for a peaceful death and salvation in the hereafter, the ultimate success. Let us be not deceived by the deceivers and deviate from the path of Allah.

Saleh Mohammad Ayub
Kalabagan, Dhaka

Revenge...

The way we are now grabbing the nature is not a good sign. Having seen the news of grabbing the beach, I felt pity for the people as one day they will suffer for this.

How could they destroy the natural beauty? Don't they have a heart? How could we be so ungrateful? If the Sundarbans were not mapped in our country, our northern part would have been annihilated by the fury of Sidr. In reply, we are cutting the trees.

Is not it quite simple that nature will take its revenge one day? That day, Sundarbans will leave us alone as we are now making the forests empty.

Md. Washiqul Alam
Azimpur, Dhaka

Sinister speed breakers

On the night of the 27 October as we were returning from a family dinner through Gulshan Avenue North, our loaded car suddenly flew in the air and fell heavily and before we got over the jolt it happened again. It gave us such a nasty shock. Fortunately, the axle was not broken but the shock absorbers were damaged.

We came to realise that two speed breakers had been erected that very afternoon by DCC to enhance the "security" of a Ruling Party bigwig although a police box was already occupying the sidewalk.

The regrettable part was that there was no light or white paint to warn us of the new speed breakers. It shows a total lack of consideration for ordinary taxpayers and just pleasing the bigwigs in power is all that matters.

There are several speed breakers in different roads of Gulshan north; the residents know all the spots and they drive carefully over these. But what about people coming from other areas? We cannot believe the DCC cannot do anything about it—it is just their callousness. Is it too much to ask them to paint white stripes and fix a floodlight over these sinister speed breakers?

We draw the attention of Gulshan society. They have done many commendable deeds to improve our life and this is one more thing they can take up with the somnolent DCC of Gulshan.

Sakhawat Hossain
Gulshan
Dhaka

VIP roads

I have never really understood why there are certain roads in Dhaka that have been designated as "VIP roads". Ministers and other senior government officials supposedly travel by these roads a lot, hence the name. Isn't the concept of having such "VIP" roads in itself rather elitist? I admit, rickshaws do create a lot of chaos on the roads but for a rather significant portion of the country's population, they are the only (affordable) means of transportation for short distances. What, then, is the logic behind banning those vehicles on such roads? If the government and officials that we elect are supposed to ensure that all citizens are treated equally, why are they preventing citizens who can't afford other sources of transportation from travelling on such roads? When the plight of the majority is being ignored, there is something very wrong with the system.

Ameer Sobhan
Student
North South University

Greed!

We got the delectable information that after winning the Oscar the producer of the film 'Slumdog Millionaire' Mr. Danny Boyle arranged a trust fund for the poor children performers and their family to secure their future, a beautiful house to live in outside of the stinking slum, to bear expenses for schooling and provided some other facilities.

The slum dwellers now believe those are not enough for them. Now the father of the children performer is asking for a posh house with a pool (which even the middle-upper class people cannot dream of) and a car. Greed is now leading the slum dwellers to kill the golden goose!

Nabila Tahsin
Muhammadpur
Dhaka

Trade union

The government has rightly decided to introduce trade union in the garment industry to safeguard the interests of garment workers, especially female workers. Starting in the late 70s, the garment industry has now become the major contributor to foreign exchange earning of the country. It is the most important task of the government to maintain a healthy environment in the industry, so that smooth running

of the industry is not hampered.

So, the government and those concerned should introduce necessary regulations and restraint mechanisms in practicing trade union so that this does become a burden on the garment industry.

Md. Faruk Hossain
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New Circuit House Road, Baharchara
Cox's Bazar



TANVIR AHMED / DRINKNEWS

On 'Science & Life' page

Congratulations for introducing the Science and Life page from November 3. This will hopefully increase the general awareness and knowledge of many readers; more so for students who will go through the page.

However, one wonders, given our standard of English education in general; how many school and college level students go through an English language daily!

Anwar's article on germ warfare was interesting. A sequel to it may recount the mechanism of the usual resistance built up by germs against continued usage of 'drugs and antibiotics', making these ineffective.

It goes to show that the molecular sized germs, can take on and resist antibiotics. This is the germ's war against antibiotics in the biochemical "warfare" in the human body between these two parties, one trying to heal, and the other bent on harming man. This fight is still raging, with no end seemingly in sight.

S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Rickshaw issue

I came across a letter from Mr. Sikander Ahmed in The Daily Star's "To The Editor" Column. His letter was nice reading apart from him being at loggerheads with Mr. Rahat of Malibagh on the rickshaw issue. It appears that he is extremely disappointed at Mr. Rahat for advocating banning of rickshaws in Dhaka main streets. I would like to request Mr. Sikander not to take things personally and try to understand the problem and react accordingly. In an example in one of his earlier letters he had stated that a fasting person would have to walk if there is no rickshaw. Really this cannot be a strong argument. In the old days there were no rickshaw here or elsewhere and not every Muslim had a horse or a camel but that did not stop them from fasting or crossing the desert during the month of fasting. Sure it was tough for them but they adapted and managed. The truth of the matter is that when a facility is not available people learn to adapt.

Certainly, we are adapting to spiral price hike, poor law and order situation, intolerable traffic jam, global warming, etc., etc. We can complain about all we want but at the end we have to adapt because things won't change overnight.

I would invite Mr. Sikander to consider how much fuel and time are going to be wasted in traffic jams. The country is paying foreign exchange to import this fuel rendering the mass helpless and unable to reach their destination on time. Imagine what torture a student goes through when he is unable to arrive for his exam on time, not to speak of a patient fighting for life in the jam.

On the other hand I really could not understand the meaning of Prof. Rabbani's suggestion to garage one's car

Please stop this name game

The Awami League has started the name game again. When they were in power last time, many institutions' names which had been in use for a long, long time, were changed to the names of their liking in the last few months. They are on it again.

Recently, the 250-bed Chandpur General Hospital inaugurated by former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has been renamed. We learned that the plaque had been removed and replaced with the name of Awami League leader Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim.

By this sort of actions they are belittling themselves, people have become fed up and are loathing it. So, for their own good, the Awami League should refrain from changing names. We hope they will come to their senses.

Nur Jahan
SS Khaled Road
Chittagong

Confrontation or cooperation?

Two major political parties are increasingly becoming agitated against each other. The simple issue is whether we want "Mujib's Bangladesh" or "Zia's Bangladesh". Although many political pundits would not like my simplification of the fact of political culture in Bangladesh, like any other event in history, Mujib fell and Zia rose as the ruler of Bangladesh. Both of them have left enough dedicated soldiers to fight their way for political power and rule over Bangladesh. We are simply following the path of the Mughal Empire's history in undivided India. Both the parties have successfully befuddled the people through political propaganda. The media is their best projector and supporter.

In the above process, over the last 38 years the people have been depoliticised in real democratic term. And have been divided in such a way that there comes always a chance for unconstitutional power and emerging fundamentalists to grab power unconstitutionally - either in the pretext of reform and development or in the name of the savior of religion.

With this simple analogy, I can humbly suggest that the people be allowed to express their free opinion as to what kind of political system they want and who should run it - democratic elected government, military backed government (openly or tacitly) or religion based government. I think we should go for people's opinion on the issue.

The strong emergence of religious extremist groups in Bangladesh will put us shortly in the category of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Let the people decide which political party is responsible for this dangerous political turning point; and find out who are the beneficiaries of this trend.

Use people's power to eliminate all evil design and evil device.
A reader
One-mail

Climate change!

Perhaps talking about biodiversity or wildlife protection and conservation is against the present-day politics and those who speak about it are also on the wrong side of politics. The reason is 'CHANGE' - change in politics, change in time (DST), change in office time, change in the season (winter is approaching), change in wind direction and finally the most important 'CLIMATE CHANGE'. Climate change has earned so much fame that for anything good or bad, the admiration or the criticism - IT IS CLIMATE CHANGE.

The Buriganga river does not have any life - it is because of climate change.

The untreated effluents discharged in the rivers are killing aquatic life - it is climate change.

Land grabbers filling in floodplains for housing or other purposes - it is climate change.

Forest land acreage declining due to land conversion, deforestation, etc - it is climate change.

Tiger population is declining - it is climate change.

Gharials are on the verge of extinction - it is climate

change.

Dolphins are disappearing from our rivers - it is climate change.

Freshwater turtles, frogs declining - it is climate change.

Use of lethal chemicals to increase shelf-life of fruits, vegetables - it is climate change.

Forest department cannot stop poaching - due to climate change.

So, we see that many bad things are being done by climate change. BUT nothing to worry. Climate change has done one big favour for us that to make news line headings just use CLIMATE CHANGE, for anything that can not be explained use CLIMATE CHANGE, to ask for money use CLIMATE CHANGE and so on. If you mention the problems and/or highlight/address the root cause - you are on the wrong side. Our biodiversity/wildlife really need friends like 'friends in need are friends indeed' and not friends who change with the climate change. The root causes of wildlife extinction - the human elements - are to be addressed.

I would like someone to enlighten me that how the thirteen species mentioned in

the news item got extinct due to impacts of climate change (DS 5 Nov 2009). To be exact the news item mentioned 'climate change and man-made adverse environment' emphasizing climate impacts as the major culprit whereas it should have been the other way round. Studies on the Bangladeshi wildlife are yet to be conducted to establish any concrete evidence on the impact of Climate Change. The information published by the 4th assessment report of the IPCC are predictions and these predictions were based on certain models (the same information is being used over and over again) that are proving wrong as the authors themselves are now saying that things are changing faster than they had predicted earlier - We also see a CHANGE here.

I wish that this CHANGE FEVER ends soon and we get back to the real world and save the life forms and their habitats that we are knowingly destroying.

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Our transportation system

Bangladesh is a developing country with a huge potential. But, we are still lagging behind in many aspects. We don't have a sound transportation system yet. Most of the roads and highways need to be modernized and a robust expansion programme should be undertaken to expand those facilities to new areas. Proper transportation infrastructure is a prerequisite for the mobilization of resources throughout the country and to achieve cost effectiveness. Movement of various industrial commodities, agricultural products as industry input, perishable goods etc. from one place to another quickly, will reduce various uncertainties and market imperfections. If a stress free human mobilization can be ensured among various places, it will reduce extra pressure on urbanization which we are observing in the large cities in our country at the moment. This will only be possible if a properly planned, consolidated transportation infrastructure is ensured. It will be possible by gradually developing the roads and highways, expanding and linking them to various economic centres with a modern fragmentation that will provide the speed that is needed to achieve a higher level of productivity and efficiency for various economic activities.

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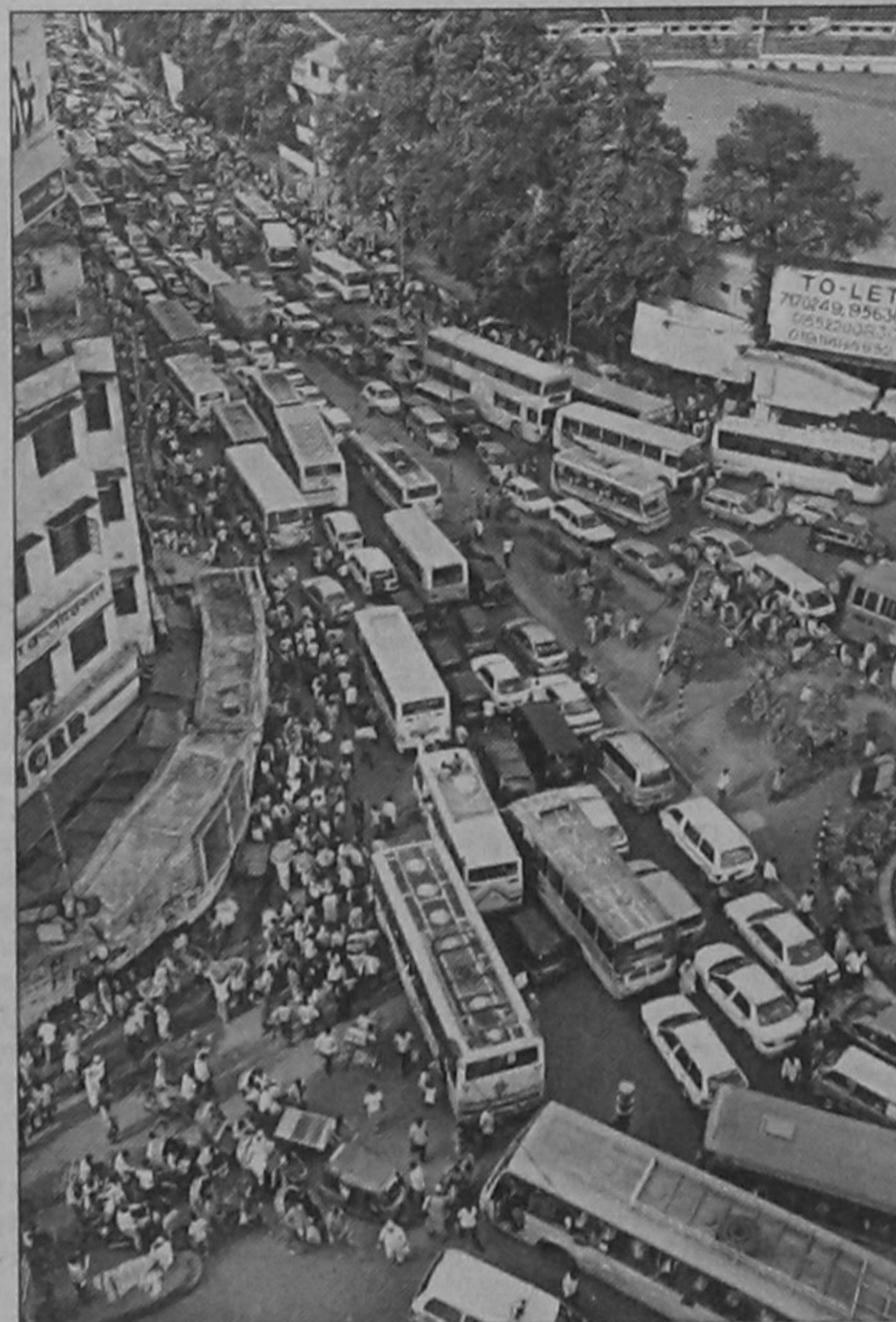


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