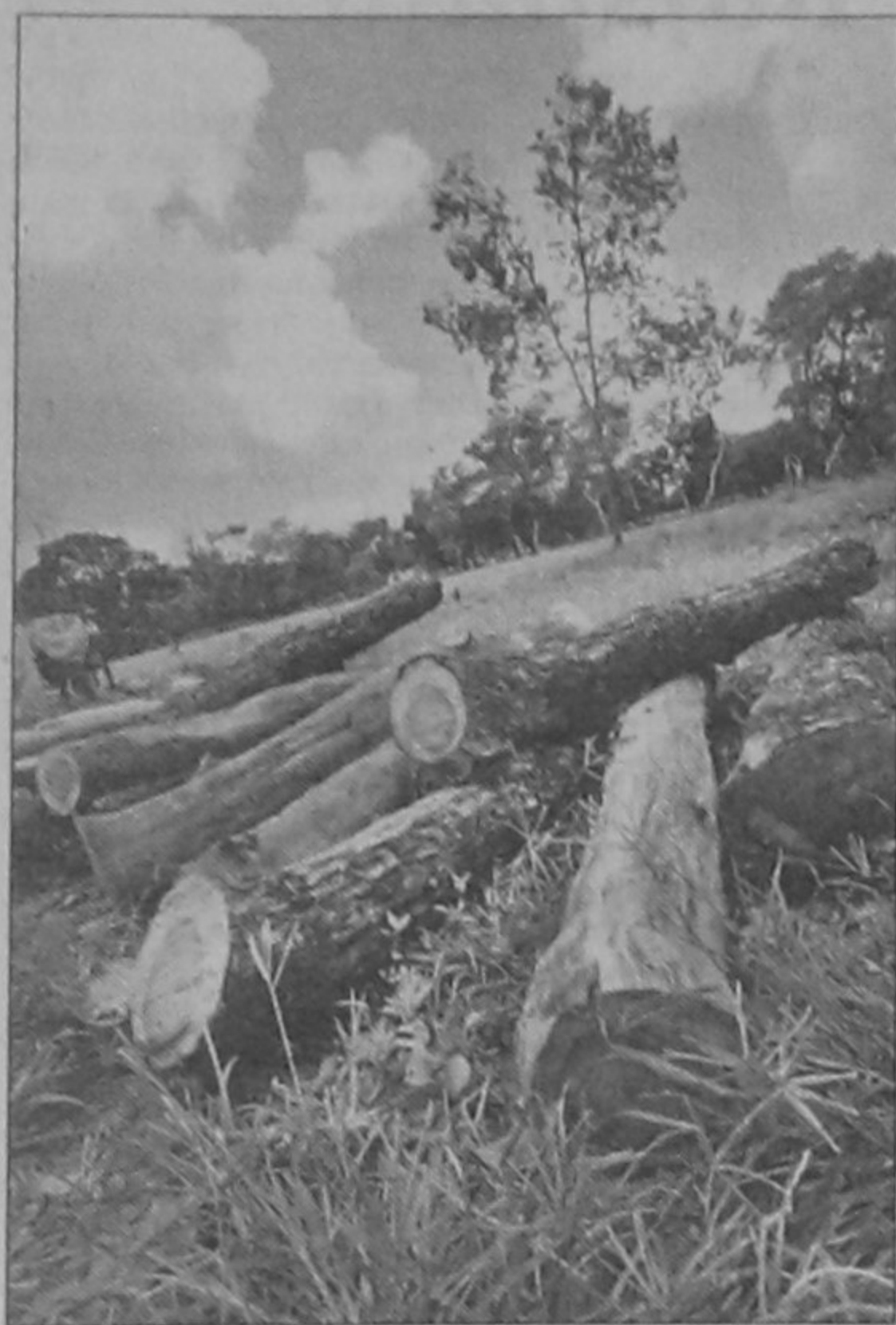


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

Impact of deforestation



In many countries, like Bangladesh, massive deforestation is going on and is changing climate & geography. Now it is clear to all that deforestation has a substantial contribution to global warming. In addition, burning of forests in order to clear land releases tones of carbon dioxide which increases global warming.

Deforestation reduces the content of water in the soil and groundwater as well as atmospheric moisture. It also reduces soil cohesion. Subsequently, erosion, flooding & landslide occur. Mainly in the tropical areas, deforestation account for up to one-third of total anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions, which is very bad for the environment.

A country should have 25 % forestland of its total area to get rid of environmental degradation. But we have

only 16%. Approaching dangers are knocking at the door. So time has come to think about it and legal measures in order to arrest the deforestation trend in our country. Our children are growing up in a polluted environment. So the upcoming generation must be given the opportunity to understand the bad impact of deforestation. The civil societies, NGOs, local communities should come forward and work closely with the government agencies. Awareness building education and training can play a pivotal role in this process.

Md. Shadiqur Rahman
(Agriculturist)
Trainer
Human Rights & Legal
Services Program
Brac Training & Resource
Centre
Sreemongal, Moulvibazar

of Greenwich Observatory, time is advanced by four (4) minutes. Therefore, our standard time is (90°4=360° minutes=6 hours) GMT+6 hours. We have a moral obligation to follow this time i.e. the Bangladesh Standard Time (BST).

In view of the above, the authorities may seriously consider reverting back to BST as soon as possible.
Syed Farhat Ahmad Roomy
New DOHS, Dhaka

To the PM...

Honourable Prime Minister, we recently noticed with grief that the newspapers of Bangladesh published a lot of news about the corruption of the lawmakers of your party. We are surprised that the local authorities or the authority from the top have not taken any visible action against those MPs. We also see that the land grabbers are acquiring the lands and the water reservoirs without any fear. The executive orders from you and your advisers and ministers are not obeyed accordingly. We also see that the security situation of our country is worsening day by day. The attack on Barrister Tapash and one woman leader of your party captured with AK 47 reveal that we are in danger.

Form a crisis management team at your office. Choose some burning issues of the month having a negative public perception. Then let the team handle the matters and give the press update on those matters.

Amit Khan
Agrani Bank Town
Gollamari, Khulna

Footpaths

Earlier, it was commonly said that most footpaths on the busy streets were occupied by hawkers. But now the situation is even worse! Footpaths are now occupied by builders' construction materials (sand, bricks, rods, etc.). Furthermore, buses of various transport companies have taken away a big portion of the road adjacent to footpaths.

So, the question naturally arises, footpaths for whom? Who will put the pedestrians back to footpaths for their safe and easy movement?
Professor M Zahidul Haque
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University
Dhaka

Why not the cameraman?

On Nov 3, 2009, I had an opportunity to attend a seminar under the banner of "climate change": at a seminar hall of Dhaka University. The moderator announced a 'one minute' silence in remembrance of the four leaders in the jail on that very day. As per the announcement, the audience started one-minute silence. But suddenly, a sound disturbed everybody and broke the silence.

Later on, it was noticed that it was due to the cameraman who made a noise during his to and fro movement to take the photo of the minister and other dignitaries attending the ceremony.

My question is: was it not applicable for the cameraman to show respect by remaining silent for a minute?
Engr. Abdul Jalil
One of the participants of the seminar

Monument for martyrs

The construction work of a memorial monument for martyrs started a decade ago. But still the work is incomplete and unfinished. No visitor goes there, and there is no way to pay trib-

ute to the Martyrs of 1971 Liberation War.

Mahmud Ali Kabir
Ex-BSS correspondent
Gopalganj



PHOTO: MAHMUD ALI KABIR

A query

Unemployment is a major problem in Bangladesh. Most of the students in Bangladesh who are studying in public universities are facing session jam in their academic life. The students are wasting so much time in their academic life that they do not get enough time to get a govt job after completing their higher education. Session jams occur in educational institutions in Bangladesh due to political unrest. I have completed higher degree from the highest seat of learning in Bangladesh. But it is unfortunate that I have not got a government job yet. During the last caretaker government regime Bangladesh Krishi Bank gave an advertisement through BRC (Bankers Recruitment Committee) for recruiting some officers. The BRC took a written test on 29/06/07 and viva on 22/11/07. They prepared a list of the candidates who passed the viva voce. However, we have not received any information regarding the matter so far.

When will the matter be resolved?

Mritunjoy Biswas
Jagannath Hall
Dhaka University

Stop them

Hijras in great numbers enter into the houses of Uttara in search of newly born babies. Their main target is to get a huge sum of money by keeping hostage the baby and intimidating the inmates of the house. Wherever a baby is born to a family, hijras storm that house all of a sudden. They abuse inmates of the house with filthy words if the door is not opened or payment is not made as per their demand. They play the last trick to get the ransom threatening abduction of the baby for good whose return would not be possible by any amount of money in future. Inmates yield to their demands for the safety of the baby. Hijras choose the timing of storming houses in search of babies during working hours of the day when male members are away from the house. They never leave the place till such time their mission is fulfilled. Nobody dares to face the hijras at that time in support of the victim's family as they are very much arrogant in nature and militant in behaviour. Now it is really a point to ponder whether this type of letting loose of anarchy by hijras is their legal right or not.

The government should immediately engage law enforcers to stop hijra menace in society by enacting stringent laws before law and order goes out of control on this issue.

Md. Lutfar Rahman
Uttara, Dhaka

Lack of civility

The behaviour of the MNS legislators in Maharashtra Assembly was highly deplorable. The results of last assembly elections have clearly shown that even the Marathi people have rejected the behaviour of this party. The threats to and beating of Hindi speaking people on the roads was also disgusting.

The Indian national parties should come forward and condemn it strongly so that similar incidents do not happen in future.
Mohammed Sadullah Khan
Riyadh

An errant soldier

Doctors are trained to save life and they are supposed to treat even wounded enemy soldier. This is why they don't carry weapons even in the combat zone. Yet Major Hasan, a US army doctor, murdered scores of his fellow soldiers at Fort Hood. This way his murderous act resembles the systematic slaughter of fellow Muslims by the Taliban in Pakistan.

As Pakistani journalist Mustafa Qadri wrote in Hong Kong's Asian Times on Sept. 17, 2008: "A Taliban suicide attack on the Wah army munitions facility in August killed 70 and injured over 100 more. All those killed were ordinary, working Muslims, as were the people killed by a Taliban suicide bomber when he blew himself up at the casualty ward of a hospital in the city of Dera Ismail Khan on August 19. The Taliban said the attack was justified because the hospital was administering polio vaccinations, something it considers prohibited by Islam." Mass murder of fellow Americans by Major Hasan is similar to the mass murder of fellow Pakistanis by the Taliban.

It is also strange that this brutal murderer Major Hasan was allowed to work even after it was clear that he was a terrorist sympathiser. Anybody supporting the murderous al-Qaeda / Taliban or any other terrorist groups should be kept under watch and no position of responsibility should be assigned to them.

Mahmood Elahi

Ottawa, Canada

Anomaly in civil service

Character assassination of the bureaucrats has become a routine work of some responsible quarters. In a recent interview, an adviser to the PM said that there were corruption allegations against the officers who were not promoted and made Officers on Special Duty (OSD) and allegations are being investigated by the Anti-Corruption Commission. It is a new proposition put forward by the adviser, which we never heard of before! It is well known that making of random OSDs and promoting officers en masse have been creating chaos in the civil service.

For the sake of smooth functioning of the administra-

tion and well-being of the country as a whole, the government may take the allegations seriously and the rumour of the pervasive corruption in civil service promotion, posting and making of the OSD process be thoroughly investigated into.

Ahmed Munir
Dhaka

Education in England

To explain the rise of English studies, we need to indicate briefly what higher education was like in England until the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The short answer is that, it was a Church of England monopoly. There were only two universities, Oxford and Cambridge. These were divided into small individual Colleges, which were run as monastic institutions. Only men were allowed to attend; in these colleges, students, obviously, had to be from Anglican communicants and attend the college chapel. The teachers were ordained ministers, indeed, Priest or Churchmen, who had to be unmarried. They could live in the college. The subjects were the Classics (ancient Greek and Latin Literature), Divinity and Mathematics. Anyone who was Catholic, Jewish, or Methodist, or atheist was not allowed to enter there and also barred from the professions and the civil service. The organization of higher education had not changed since the Middle Ages. Many attempts were made to reform the situation, to expand higher education and introduce practical subjects into the curriculum, but they all came up against entrenched conservative forces. The change came in 1826 when a university college was founded in London with a charter to award degrees to men and women of all religions. In 1828, English was offered as an academic subject for study, and they appointed the first professor of English in 1829. However it was not really English as we know it, but it was mainly the study of English language merely using literature. English literature was first taught at King's College, London beginning in 1831.

Mohammad Hanif Sayed
Dept of English Language
and Literature
International Islamic
University Chittagong

Daylight saving time

Now it has become doubtful if we would ever go back to Bangladesh Standard Time (BST)! Initially the clocks were advanced by an hour for saving electric power and reduce load shedding. Reportedly, now it would be continued for easing Dhaka city traffic jams.

From newspaper reports it appears that the present system i.e. GMT+7 hours would continue indefinitely. It is no more Daylight Saving Time (DST) because these days instead of saving we are losing daylight time. One has to wonder as to why our scientific community especially Meteorologists, Geography teachers, Navigational experts, Cartographers etc are so silent about the issue. Of course, one honourable exception is Prof Muhammad Zafar Iqbal who had voiced his concern at least twice in a vernacular daily.

The question of saving power and reduction of load shedding by advancing the clock has to be considered from a practical point of view. Firstly, the concept of DST is not applicable to us because in our case the difference between summer and winter daylight hours is insignificant. Secondly, electric power cannot be saved and accumulated during morning lean periods for use during peak hours in the evening to avoid load shedding. Therefore, it is perhaps not right to say that hundreds of megawatts of power has been saved by advancing the clock. The only way to avoid load shedding during peak hour is to increase generation capacity.

Whatever has been achieved, if at all, by advancing the clock could be done simply by advancing the working hours. It has been done before with some degree of success. For example during Ayub regime working hours for most government offices were 07:30 to 14:00 hours. On Friday it was 07:30 to 12:30 hrs while Sunday was a holiday.

As pointed out by Prof Muhammad Zafar Iqbal we are located at a mean Longitude of about 90 degrees east. By the accepted international standard, for every degree of Longitude to the east

Climate change

Our world has a big challenge ahead, which is climate change. The world is going to be affected due to climate change and global warming. Due to climate change sea levels will rise, and some countries like Bangladesh and the Maldives are going to get flooded. Also the number of natural disasters will rise. Climate change and global warming are caused by human activities like burning fossil fuel and deforestation. Climate change will be a disaster to human kind. There will be 150 million climate refugees because of climate change and environmental disasters. Lots of people are going to suffer and die. In 1995, half of Bhola Island in Bangladesh became permanently flooded, leaving 500,000 people homeless. The Bhola Islanders have been described as some of the world's first climate refugees. In 2007, a Bangladeshi scientist stated: "We're already seeing hundreds of thousands of climate refugees moving into slums in Dhaka." These refugees were fleeing flooded coastal areas. That's why, now we are watching the beginning of the new disaster age. Do people care? The media now has a very big job of alerting the general people about this.

Ahnaaf Ahmad
The Aga Khan School
Uttara, Dhaka



MUNIR UZ ZAMAN / DRONEWS

Shahbagh

Role of the media

When the BNP's front organisations (JCD, JJD, etc.) started extortion, encroachment on public and private property, tender manipulation, etc., all the pro-AL papers carried huge editorials calling for an end to such misdeeds. Similarly, when those crimes are committed by the AL's front organisations (BCL, JL, etc.) all the pro-BNP media go on an overdrive to inform the nation how unholy and destructive it is and why it should be stopped. Sadly, these demands for the culprits to be "brought to book" are actually short-term solutions. No matter what "disciplinary actions" the ruling party takes, we know that next time when another party goes to power its front organisations will do the same and we will all be reading the same editorials again. It happened many times in the past and it will certainly happen in the future. Surely, a more effective solution would be to outlaw all these trouble-making fronts.

If our media genuinely wants an end to all the extortion, gang raping, encroachment, tender manipulation, etc., by the ruling party-men, then all of them would have put a lot more pressure on our political parties (and we know our media is capable of doing that) to immediately dissolve their ugly front organisations. But they always shy away from that. Why? Because they know that without these "rowdy" elements their beloved party will not have enough muscle power on the street to fight with their opponents. That is why many of our newspapers are willing to look the other way, willing to accept all the heinous crimes committed by these front organisations.

We are not saying that our newspapers never criticise their chosen parties. They do, they do that a lot, in fact. But each criticism is quickly dampened by lots of 'lives' and 'buts' at the end of the paragraph. Sometimes within the same sentence! If some elements of a political party are involved in wanton destruction of our country and our culture then we need to condemn them and tell it the way it is. Why use ifs and buts?

It is time for our newspapers to stop pretending to be our friends. Stop printing

sugar-coated articles and editorials to give the impression that they are speaking for our cause. They are not. They are simply playing party politics with a dash of journalism and a perceived intellectual and moral high ground. Deep down, they always put the interests of their chosen parties before the interests of the people.

Azad Miah
Oldham
UK

Ads and newspapers

Every morning we open the newspaper to see it flooded with various types of advertisements, like some solely advertisement papers abroad. We do understand that advertisements are the lifeline of any newspaper, which helps to survive and make profits. But at the same time, the newspapers also should consider the readers' sentiment and quench their thirst for information.

Monzur Rahman
Dhaka

Airport in bad shape

Recently, I went to Zia International Airport to receive a guest coming from the US and made my entry into the concourse hall by purchasing a ticket of Tk 200. The plane was delayed and meanwhile I went to the nearby washroom. To my utter horror, I found the place worse than a village service latrine. It was beyond use. All kinds of garbage including human shits were found stuffed and filled up the broken commode and around it and I had to burst out of the room. Believe me, the first thing I did after reaching home was to take a full bath and tried to forget the scene I encountered in the toilet room! The tea stalls around the area were found using those washrooms to clean their utensils and dumping of wastes as well! If you enter the airport you will find gross deterioration, so far cleanliness is concerned everywhere compared to what we used to see during the caretaker government. The information booth before the parking no.1 of the arrival area is littered with garbage and it seemed the area was not cleaned for days. Besides, the pathetic plight of the passengers continues due to inordinate delay in arrival of the baggage. The sufferings of the incoming passengers particularly our expatriate workers from the brokers, taxi drivers, porters etcetera outside the terminal continue unabated despite several so called drives by the CAAB authorities.

The government is now talking about the upgrading of the airports. But who will implement the plan? Certainly it is not possible with the present administration managing the services in the airports now. There is no other alternative but to contract out the airport services to the foreign agencies if we are really interested to upgrade the service standard to international level. Otherwise, trying to carry out the upgrading with the present administration will amount to crying in the wilderness.

Mohammad Ataul Hoque
One-mail

Ethnic unrest in China

According to a news item published in an Indian newspaper ("The Hindu"), the authorities in China's Xinjiang region have executed nine people for their role in July's ethnic unrest. Eight of the executed persons are believed to be Uighurs. Xinjiang has seen intermittent tension between Uighurs and Hans, who have migrated to the region in large numbers. I would like to express my concern over China's treatment of its Muslim minority.

I urge China to improve its treatment of Chinese Muslims.
Asaf Ali Shah
Lahore, Pakistan

Late night shows

It has become a bad social trend to organise late night open air entertainment. During that time heavy instrumental music is played with loudspeakers. Unfortunately it never enters the organizer's and artist's head that there may be ailing people around them in different conditions. More importantly, night is the right time for relaxation and long rest. One cannot violate others' rights and one's enjoyment cannot be the cause of others' suffering. So, when it is time for sleeping at night, then it is not really sensible to make noise. It is a complete nuisance and one kind of sound pollution as well.

If that type of recreation is needed, then it should be in an enclosed auditorium.

S.M. Rumen
Pahartali, Chittagong

Traffic jam

One of the worst jams in Dhaka is experienced on the Banani, Gulshan and Baridhara roads, especially the Gulshan and Kamal Ataturk Avenues. Hours are lost every day wasting fuel and our diminishing gas reserve. Feeble attempts to introduce one-way traffic in some roads did ease the jam but were not enough to make an impact on the overall situation.

The Gulshan-Banani bridge road was left incomplete. Instead of continuing along the Gulshan-Banani Lake, it abruptly turns at Road 34. Had it continued it would have connected the Gulshan-Mohakhali road near the shop "Vasavi". This would allow traffic coming from the Gulshan-Mohakhali road to pass alongside the lake to Kamal Ataturk Road without using the Gulshan Avenue. The road could further extend alongside the Gulshan-Niketon Lake and connect Hatirjheel project road at the end of the South Gulshan Park. Those coming from Gulshan-Tejgaon road could then avoid the Gulshan Avenue and drive all the way to Kamal Ataturk Avenue.

Likewise, two-lane one-way roads can be constructed along the western side of these lakes so that those coming from Kamal Ataturk Avenue can drive along the western side opposite to those using the road on the eastern side of these lakes.

Similarly, one-way roads can be constructed alongside the eastern and western side of the of the Gulshan-Baridhara Lake connecting the under construction Hatirjheel road with the Gulshan-Baridhara road.
Md. Mahmoodul Haque
Gulshan, Dhaka