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## Launch capsize

Launch capsize is taking place on a regular basis. The value of life is greatly undermined in our context. We lost many lives and still are losing scores of lives in launch mishaps. The noticeable thing is that most of the launch mishaps occur during various festivals

when people go to their village homes to share their happiness with near & dear ones. What a tragedy!

Mohammad Zia-ul-Haque

Eng. Department

International Islamic University Ctg.

### Monkey menace!

Recently I visited one of my relative's house who lives in Rajar Deuri in old town. In the compound and on the roof I saw a number of monkeys strolling freely and attempting to take away anything from inside the house including foods and clothes. I came to know that monkeys frequent all the houses of the old town area. Not only they take away essential household items but often attacks and hurts children and adults. It has been gathered that due to the destruction of natural habitats adjacent to Buriganga river, monkeys have become shelter-less and they are not getting enough food for their survival.

It may sound impossible but in my opinion, these monkeys should be caught and transported in cages to our forest districts and released there so that these creatures could get a natural home and the residents of the old town could get rid of the monkey menace!

Professor M Zahidul Haque  
Chairman  
Department of Agricultural  
Extension & Information  
System  
SAU, Dhaka

### Debt burden

The global economy is heading toward a sustained recovery but given the risks of another downturn it is too soon to withdraw stimulus. International Monetary Fund Deputy (IMF) managing director John Lipsky said on Friday. "We think that we are on a trajectory toward sustained growth but that the recovery is going to be relatively moderate and relatively sluggish."

All the Western industrialised nations, as well as most of the poor developing nations, are so deeply in debt to the IMF, and their economies so unbalanced & fragile with inflation, that it wouldn't take much to cause them to all come tumbling down into a full Depression! In fact, it's amazing that it hasn't happened already!

The dollar will crash and burn one of these days, as I've said, and it will come as quite a shock both to America and the world. It's sinking against the euro and the yen right now. But when the crash itself comes, it will be sudden, causing "a mighty widening of the eyes among those who have not discerned the signs of the times!"

Ted Rudow III, MA  
Menlo Park, CA 94026

### Valuable information

Migration applicants are advised to be careful about the "Positive Profession/Profession List". The population of developed countries is decreasing day by day for various reasons and for that they are recruiting people from developing or less developed countries around the world. Canada, Australia, New Zealand are well known in this regard for a long time. They are recruiting people in different categories like skill category, entrepreneur category and investment category. Among all these, they handle the most number of applications in skill category. There is an age bar to apply in this category. For example, 49 years for Canada, 45 years for Australia and 40 years for Denmark. Beside this there are some other criteria like education and work experience. If you want to apply in skill category, you should have at least bachelor's degree and minimum one year work experience. Most of the counselling or migration firms counsel the prospective clients keeping all these in mind. But above all these criteria there is another important point to make an immigration application which is the profession list. Profession list is always changing. Denmark has named the profession list as "Positive List" and Australia has named it "Skill Occupation List". In most cases it is seen that applicants who are submitting applications on their own are not fully aware of the Profession list. There are some firms who are alluring all types of professionals to submit applications without considering the profession or occupation list. For that, candidates are being cheated.

Adv. Quazi Raquibul Islam  
President, Bangladesh  
Immigration Lawyers' Society  
Shantinagar, Dhaka

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### Prepaid gas meters

Titas Gas Transmission & Distribution Company Ltd is going to introduce prepaid gas meters for its residential consumers in the city's Dhanmondi area. This is a very good idea. This will check misuse of gas by consumers. Besides consumers will not have to wait in queue for hours at banks. To preserve our valuable gas, this new system should be introduced everywhere in our country, especially in Dhaka city. S.M. Shamim-Ur-Rashid  
Khilkhet, Dhaka

### National interests

Mr. Menon, Shahidullah and Anu Mohammad are vocal about national interest. As a remitter of foreign currency I join with them. The govt has to come to the media and open a debate.

Our parliamentary discussions should include "national interest topics". When I see BTV, our honourable MPs talk about local problems like local river dredging, avoiding similar national issues. They spend a lot of time for flattering the leaders who have favoured them to get nomination due to which they could become MP.

Dr. Azizul Karim  
GP, Australia

### Rethink about DST

Do the policymakers know that the salatul Fazar ends at 7:00am now? After a few days it will be shifted 10 to 20 minutes later. Then how is it rational and possible to start schools by 8:00am and offices at 9:00am? It's simply meaningless! Revert to Bangladesh Standard Time, please.

Md. Abdul Hamid

Shahjalal University, Sylhet

### Death sentence

While the Amnesty International is deeply concerned to hear that Fatima Hussein al-Badi is facing execution in Yemen for killing her husband a crime that the Supreme Court found she did not take part in. So that international organization has called on us to commute the death sentence against Fatima Hussein al-Badi, who was convicted after an unfair trial and an unfair process. It also appealed that all the people facing the death penalty in Yemen must be tried in accordance with international standards for fair trial, including ensuring that they all have access to legal representation and adequate time and facilities to prepare their case and people facing the death penalty, like Fatima, must be granted the opportunity to appeal the verdict and sentence and the right to seek pardon or commutation of the sentence.

In accordance with the above appeal, in 1975, the killers murdered the most popular leader and the Father of the Nation of Bangladesh. In addition to many others, they also killed Bangabandhu's wife, two innocent daughter in laws, handicapped brother, toddler son, pregnant wife of his nephew, and an infant relative.

Since when did Amnesty International start interfering with fair judicial system of a country?

Gopal Sengupta  
McGill University  
Canada

### History of the armed forces

I commend The Daily Star. Internet Edition for the front page coverage on the 38th Bangladesh Armed Forces Day observed on November 21, 2009, although one would have appreciated an editorial on that big occasion.

Born during the final months of the 1971 War of Independence, the Armed Forces have reached many milestones and contributed to national fames as well as national shames. Gone are the days at least one would hope when the military officers killed two popular presidents including the brutal massacre of the entire family of one, widely regarded as the Founder of the Nation.

Apart from the few months of joint battle-field experiences gained with the Mukti Bahini and the Indian Army, the all-volunteer Bangladesh Armed Forces have hardly any other combat experience. Moreover, those military personnel who gained the valuable experiences are mostly retired or dead now.

Ashraf Z Khan, Ph.D  
Morrisville, USA

### Historic day

November 19, 2009 is a memorable day for all of us. The reason is not unknown to us at all. We have won the battle of justice after 34 years. From today people will remember this day with full satisfaction and pride as well. Satisfaction is for the justice to the late president Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family members and pride for being able to erase the disgrace of the massacre of 15 August 1975. This day has also raised the hope of ordinary people for justice being meted out to the four national leaders killed in jail on 3 November 1975 and also the trial of war criminals. Similarly, it has made us more confident that our law has its own power to control crime and punish the criminals and it has regained the almost lost faith of ordinary people. Moreover it has changed the proverb that, IF IT IS DELAYED, IT IS DENIED because this litigation has been delayed but not denied. It's true that after a long time, we have got our desired verdict.

Adiba Fannana  
Correspondent of Maulana  
Bhasani Science and  
Technology  
University (MBSTU)  
Tangail

### Armed forces

Their role is appreciated whenever they come forward to strengthen the democratic culture in the country. The way they played their role in 1991, 1996 and 2007 will be remembered with due honour. The introduction of voter ID is the most unique example of their commitment and sincerity in protecting the rights of the common men of our country. But I feel sorry when I notice how a section of the armed forces has been desperately trying to distort the history of their motherland. It was not their business to show who is our number one leader in the Liberation War. It is clear like daylight who led our war and under whose name the Liberation War was fought. But it was a willing suspension of a truth on which the country was founded. These ambivalent characters are always boneless and they are the beneficiaries of every regime. Now it is time to identify those characters to bring a change in different sectors, including Armed Forces.

There should be a written law in different administrative wings with a provision that anybody distorting the history of our war would be punished. Anybody who feels shy to utter the name of Bangabandhu should be brought under its jurisdiction. Bangabandhu is our Washington, Bangabandhu is our Gandhi, our Nelson Mandela.

His patriotism was unquestionable when he refused to accept an American diplomat's request to set up an US base in St. Martin's Island after the November cyclone in 1970. I think his daughter was able to feel the pulse. To honour this attitude of her father a naval war ship was named "Bangabandhu". Unfortunately, after 2001 the name was changed. Why was this done?

Kamaluddin Ahmed  
University of Chittagong

### Terrorism

Terrorism is an integral part of South Asian landscape. It is now termed as the number one problem in the present world. Lots of people are the victims of its gruesome proliferation.

Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the whole sub-continent are the worst victims of this demon.

Bipra Kanungo  
Momin Road, Chittagong

### Diplomats abroad

The diplomats of our country are our representatives abroad. They are the most educated and are supposed to be sober and, of course, intelligent. They look after the interests and well-being of our country. But unfortunately some of our diplomats misrepresent our country. On an official tour to one of the South-Asian countries last year, I had to encounter an ambassador who even denied meeting me in his office. Because he was busy! Since I went to his office on a courtesy call, I came back dejected. We hear lot of allegations of our labour force from the Middle-East where they fail to reach the high ups of the embassy who remain 'very busy' there.

While I was working with the Board of Investment, to arrange a tour of a probable foreign delegate of a South-Asian country who offered huge investment in our country, I sent several e-mails and faxed letters but all were in vain to get response of the concerned ambassador.

Actually, political indulgence, inaction of the authorities, and absence of punitive action against any disobedience are the foremost reasons for their snobbery which hampers the image and interests of the country.

M. Rahman  
Dhaka

## Our forests

Thanks a lot for the DS and Inam Ahmed for bringing the issue before the public. This story reveals that our forestry sector is in great disarray. Simply because we do not know what the bottom tier is doing or are they intentionally ignorant of the happenings inside all the forests in the country.

However, the irony of our fate is that all forest officials are likely to deny that something happened within their jurisdictions irrespective of their positions, from FG to CCF because all levels are said to be involved in forestry malpractice. I hope the nation has not forgotten the issue of sack full of money recovered

from some forest officials by the past caretaker government. Those forest officials did not sit in the forest but led the FD from its Dhaka headquarters. So, money comes from the illegal logging and possibly some other sources that law enforcing authorities should trace.

The govt must overhaul the entire forest department by breaking it into 3 separate institutions - commercial forestry, conservation forestry and wildlife preservation departments where each will have its own chunk of forest specifically reserved for their own activities.

Dr Reza Khan, A nature lover



PHOTO: STAR

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M. Rahman  
Dhaka

### Rickshaws

A huge debate is going on in this page on the rickshaws, but no one thinks about the rickshaw pullers! Most rickshaw pullers are people migrating from rural areas. At present there is acute unemployment and hence an increase in crimes like mugging. No doubt there will be a massive problem if the rickshaws are removed because the roads in many places are so narrow. Removal of rickshaws will definitely increase poverty and taxi cabs and CNG scooters cannot replace them instantly.

Mohammed Mahbubur Rahman  
Old town resident

### Asian Highway

'Think thrice before you step' is the golden advice of the intellectuals, men of wisdom and great statesmen, to all.

In the past we heavily suffered due to our mistakes, lapses and omissions permitting India to use Farakka Barrage temporarily and divert Ganges water, transferring Berubari in exchange of Tin Bigha, accepting status quo for Talpatti, maritime boundary talks in New Delhi and so and so forth.

We wonder if Asian Highway is an Asian Highway or it is an Indian Highway from one part of Indian territory to another part of Indian territory using Bangladesh territory enjoying transit facilities.

Before we arrive at a final decision on Asian Highway we

need a comprehensive and satisfactory information on Asian Highway, its starting point and its end, entry and exist points of each country, total mileage covered in each country, how and why some Asian countries have been left out of Asian Highway, how and why India has been given special facility to use its entry and exit points twice, once from Pakistan territory and for the second time from Bangladesh territory.

What are the merits, demerits, financial and economic benefits for Bangladesh if India uses Asian Highway for entering its territory for the second time from Bangladesh territory?

Would our Ministry of Communication and UNESCAP kindly clarify the relevant matters?

All is well that ends well.

O.H. Kabir  
Wari, Dhaka

### Breaking news

This refers to the letter by Mr Asaddar Ali, FCA of Metropolitan University with reference to Bangabandhu murder case court verdict, under the caption: "Breaking News" as published at The Daily Star on December 02, 2009.

Mr. Ali may note that English is a living language. It's no more limited to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 7th edition. In modern news reporting, particularly in reference to electronic media, breaking news is no more confined to bad news only. In modern parlance, breaking news means "interrupting the existing news-report which is being telecast", to show the latest, eagerly awaited, more important, and sensational developments. Here, breaking means interrupting forcefully.

This may be verified from any current and reputed thesaurus.

Hafeezul Alam  
BCS Admin (ret'd)  
Mohammedpur, Dhaka

### Pay raise

The ruling party immediately upon installation of the government had declared formation of a committee for the revision of government officials' salary scales and as a sequel to that the revised pay scales of the government staff were announced recently, where the highest salary is 40,000 plus other benefits and lowest is 4,000 the, the difference of ratio is 1:10.

Hence the gaps are very visible and distinct from the lowest grade to highest grade. The basic principle to determine and analyse salary scales are made taking into consideration the jobs, persons and positions, market situation and cost of living. It means that the legitimate right of the government officials is to get fair salary, for right jobs and positions and structures. Indeed, it is a very positive initiative on the part of the government.

The increase of salary is about 74% for the highest level and 51% for the lowest from the respective previous salary scales. The implementation of new salary scales will start this month.

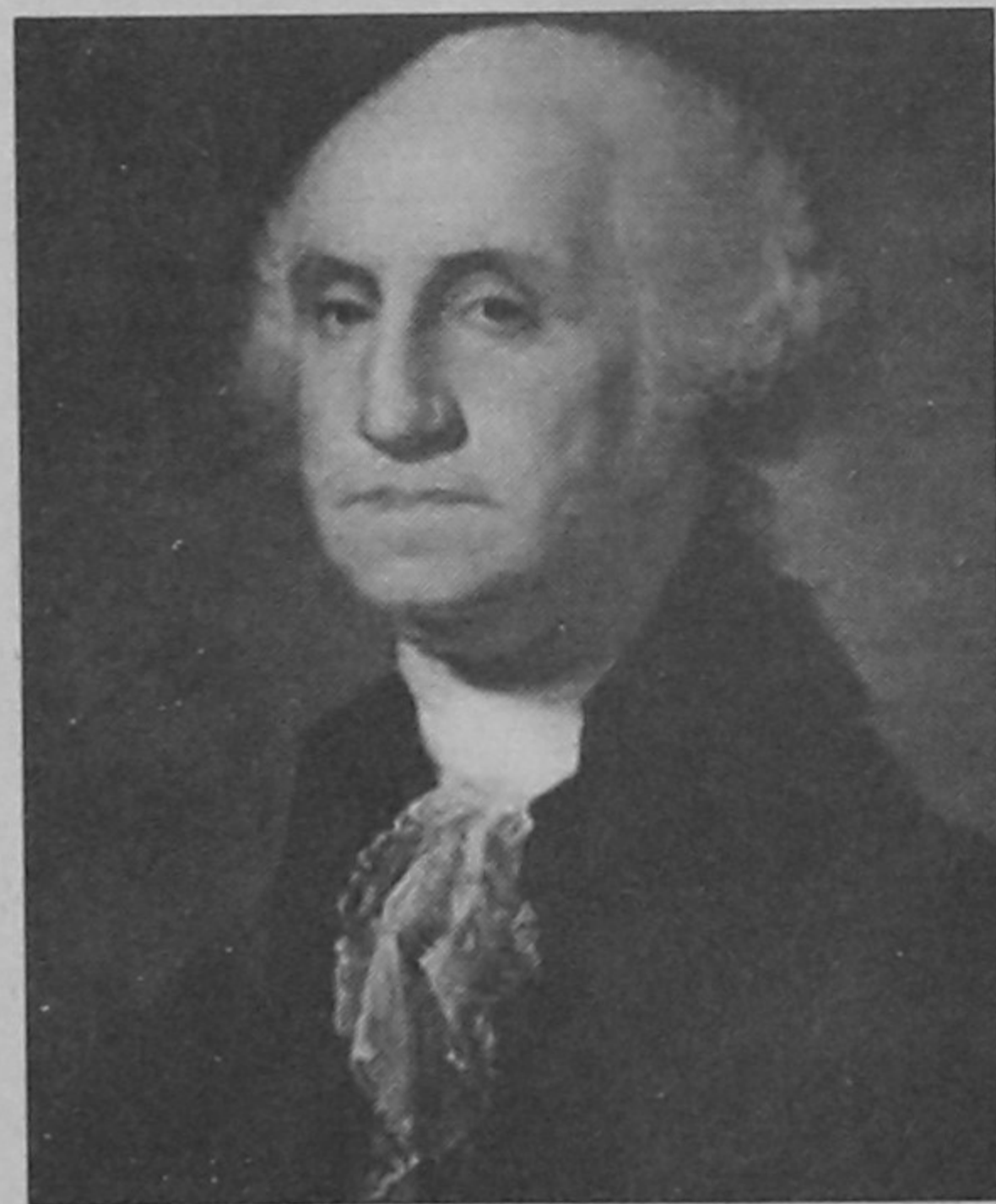
What we expect is that the government will try its best to ensure that corruption and other bad practices are properly addressed and the government officials concentrate on serving people.

At the same time, we would hope the politicians would come with ideas, vision to use the services of the officials without any favouritism and nepotism and would allow them to work as per government rules, procedures and regulations of the country and would treat all civil servants equally without any political bias.

Otherwise, good governance and impartial behaviour would be a far cry.

Nasarullah  
One-mail

## Washington's observations



Recently, I visited President George Washington's home at Mount Vernon near Washing DC. It is now a historical site opened to public. While going around the stately mansion, the tour guide said something interesting. He said that President Washington believed that a free press and an independent legal system are "two guardian angels of democracy" and when any one of them is threatened, democracy is threatened.

This is relevant in the context of recent police brutality against a journalist in Bangladesh. Democracy in Bangladesh definitely suffered when such a police beating of a journalist took place. Bangladesh is at least nominally a democracy and it must take stern against those responsible for attacking a journalist whose main duty is to inform the public.

To avert such police brutality in the future, Bangladesh should pass a legislation banning all detention of journalists. If the government finds any misreporting, it should take the concerned reporter to the court. As another American President Thomas Jefferson once remarked: "If I am to choose between a strong government and a strong press, I will choose a strong press."

Mahmood Elahi, Ottawa, Canada

## Saving Buriganga!



I want to know from authorities what precise actions are being taken for saving the Buriganga river. Many articles have been written on this issue but no one seems to take care of it at all. Our future generation will be in deep trouble if we ourselves do not take any action now.

The damage to the river has already been done. But if we do not take necessary steps right now then the scale of damage will be so great that it will be too late for us to regret then.

Hope we all take the matter of saving the Buriganga seriously. Let us all contribute to this matter.

Minhaj Ahmed  
Uttara, Dhaka