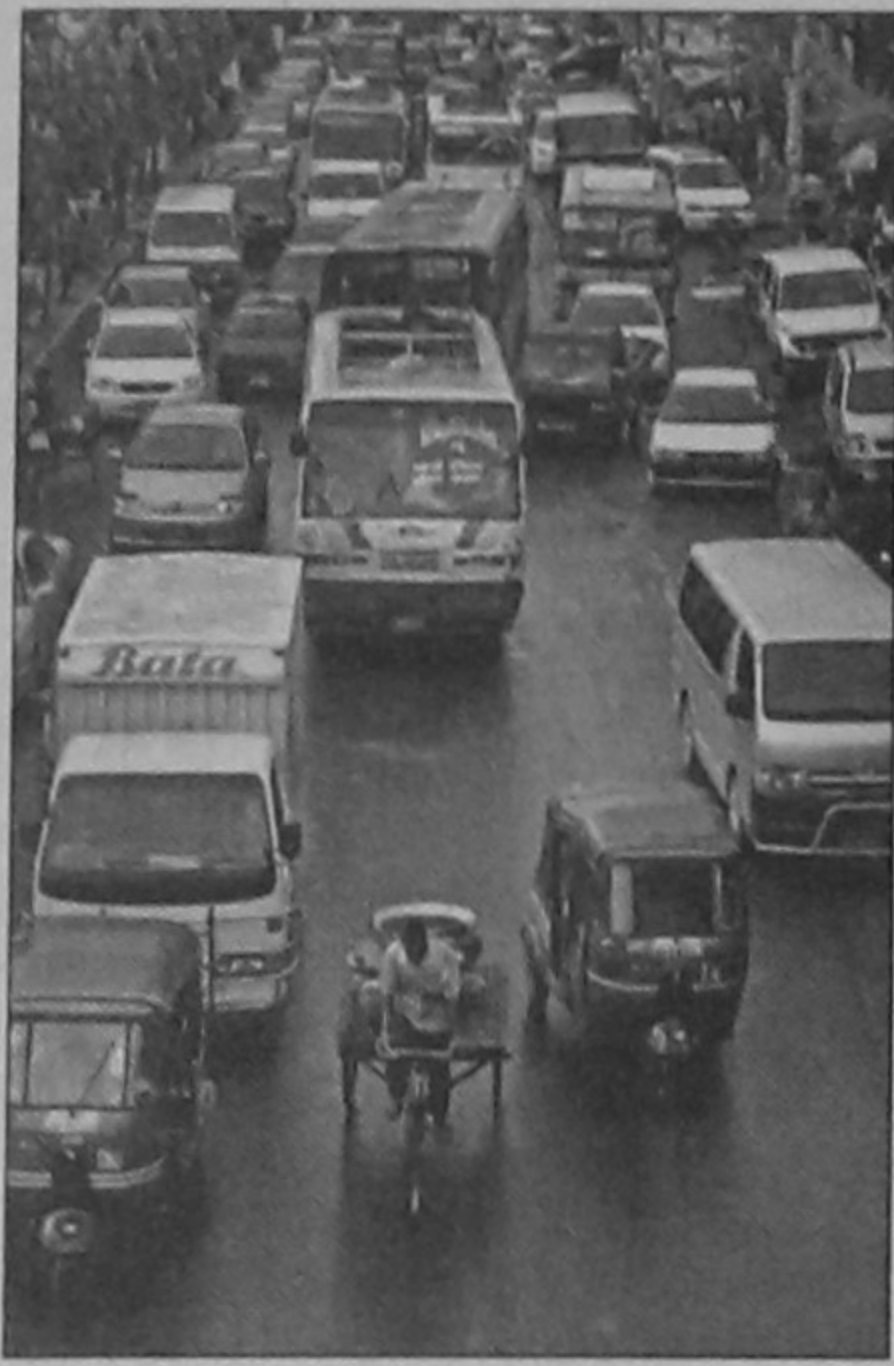


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

Dealing with traffic

I am sure we all have heard a lot on this topic and many of us are constantly thinking and coming up with ways to improve our traffic system. Surely, we as individuals can only do our part in terms of changing our behaviours and ALWAYS by obeying traffic laws. Meanwhile I feel that we must utilize our roads in the best possible manner. We can in the short term: 1. Make marked lanes on every main road and punish vigorously those who disobey traffic laws with very high fines. 2. Make turn lanes at every intersection. 3. Absolutely ensure that busses do not stop anywhere on the road except at bus stops and surely make specific bus stops first. 3. Let the main roads run by AUTOMATIC signal lights except in times of emergency when a traffic police officer can guide the traffic. 4. Make sure that NO traffic officer EVER encourages any vehicle to "GO" on Red and "STOP" on Green. This practice is systematically ruining our habits even those of us who are willing to obey the laws. 5. Make sidewalks FREE of illegal occupation and available for pedestrians. (This one step can reduce the traffic jams significantly throughout the city) 6. PUNISH, severely those who do not use the foot over bridge (where available) 7. Build fences around ALL major roads to separate the road and the sidewalk. There should be designated crossings where people will be allowed to cross the roads. 8. The dividers of the main roads MUST be high enough so that people cannot jump over it. 9. Buses must be made to move mostly on the left most lanes whenever possible. 10. The immediate step: Take Rickshaws off the main roads.



on many of the above suggestions and they are beginning to guide traffic through automated traffic signals and they are introducing traffic lanes system. Of course, we must ensure that the signals are working right and they are timed effectively to the specific traffic conditions at any given time. Let us all SINCERELY help the police in succeeding in this tough but attainable venture. And before I end, I like to mention that I am glad that someone written in favour of my suggestion in banning of rickshaws, at least one person has specifically been touched by my numerous letters, and I feel I have achieved something!

Rahat
Malibag, Dhaka

Card phone booth

The unused card phone booth was set up in the Gopalganj head post office building a decade ago for public. But the government's TNT department decided to stop this service in 1999 for unknown reasons. There were nine card phone booths in different places of Gopalganj. But all of them have been closed!

Who will look into the matter?
Mahmud Ali Kabir
Ex-BSS Correspondent
Gopalganj

To the prime minister...

Chittagong is the business city of Bangladesh and it has been contributing a lot to develop the country's economy. We the people of Chittagong expected that the Third Karnafuli Bridge would be open very soon after finishing its construction and it is also expected by project director (PD) of the bridge. He told BSS that the 950 metre long and 24.40 metre wide bridge is expected to be complete before the scheduled time -- September 2009.

Although the physical construction of the Third Karnafuli Bridge has so far been completed but its opening date is being delayed. I am earnestly requesting the honourable prime minister on behalf of the Chittagong people, to take proper steps to open The Third Karnafuli Bridge as early as possible.
Mohammed Jamal Uddin
Dept. of English
International Islamic University Ctg.

Immigrant women workers

A joint research report of UNDP & a private organisation portrays that the women workers abroad find themselves in a very miserable and pathetic condition. According to that research report, approximately 1,00,000 immigrant female workers are working in foreign countries mostly in the Middle East to support their families. They work there as domestic helper. But it is an issue of great concern that most of them, to be exact 85% of domestic workers, are the victims of physical torture & oppression by their employers. Moreover, 20% of them are being harassed sexually. As they are unaware of the labour law they are being tormented by the employers. They do not get any legal protection there. Therefore, they are compelled to bear with the oppression. Apart from this, the recruiting agency or the brokers through whom they go abroad as 'domestic helper' are not sending them under any written contract.

According to the researcher of that report, only Bangladesh embassy can save them from such oppression. They even do not know the address of Bangladesh embassy building. It is the responsibility of the govern-

ment to look into the matter seriously.
Mohammad Zia-Ul-Haque
Eng. Department
International Islamic University Ctg.

Eid day

I saw some foreigners roaming in the city and taking snaps on Eid day. An old mosque known as Tara Masjid caught their interest and they were very exuberant, enjoying themselves with the unique work of architecture with colourful small pieces of glass. Really, the mosque is an example of quality architecture.

The only thing that they complained about was unhygienic and dirty roads.
Md Mahbubur Rahman
Old town resident

Thanks, Mr. Galloway!

The Daily Star reports that George Galloway, a member of British parliament, on Wednesday demanded international enquiry into the proposed Tipaimukh dam by India. As we live in Sylhet, we can guess the problems that the dam will cause. He has noted in his speech, "If the dam is built Bangladesh, particularly, its Sylhet area will be seriously damaged and this project should be halted." We are thankful to him for such a realistic comment.

One thing was really surprising, grounds of his speaking on this issue. According to the report, "...as a Member of British Parliament he represents 40,000 people of Sylhet in London and he is duty bound to look into welfare of these people, who will be victimised by the proposed Tipaimukh dam." If we believe in his statement, simply, the question arises, what should be the role of our government in this case? He represents only 40,000 people, but our government?

It disappoints us when we perceive that our representatives speak spontaneously for saving others' interest, not ours! This is the difference between British MPs and ours.
Md. Abdul Hamid
Assistant Professor, Dept. of Business Administration
Shahjalal University, Sylhet

DST scheme

"Emon deshti kothao khunje paabey nako tumi", so sang D.L. Roy a long time back. How right he was! There is no country like ours in so many ways. But I shall only talk about one. There is no country in the world which is in love with Daylight Saving Time (DST) like ours. It was love at first sight. Our elected government and its eminent advisers totally forgot why they went for DST, in the first place. We were told it was to save energy.

How much energy they saved, only they know. It was summer then. In case they haven't noticed, it is winter now. The days have become much shorter and cooler. Nobody is using air coolers

PM on climate change

Bangladesh Head of Government Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina while addressing the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) which was recently held in the capital city of the Caribbean Island has very rightly demanded a separate financial assistance for Most Vulnerable Countries (MVCs) like Bangladesh for countering the threats stemming from climate change. Due to global warming and climate change, Bangladesh is under serious risk of losing a huge portion of her lands to the sea. The disastrous impact of climate change is getting prominently visible on Bangladesh agriculture and food

security.

Hence it is sincerely hoped that the Commonwealth by paying due attention to our PM's assertion and expectation will allocate special funds for facing the consequences of climate change to Bangladesh, the worst sufferer of the global warming with almost zero contribution to the generation and emission of greenhouse gases!

Professor M Zahidul Haque
Chairman
Department of Agricultural Extension & Information System
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University
Dhaka



and fans in the country any more.

Lot of energy has already been saved. So why punish the children for no fault of theirs? Moreover, it is really confusing to find we are one and a half hour ahead of India instead of only half an hour. On the other hand, we are at par with Thailand. Surely that is not the best way to be like the Thais!

Shahjahan Hafiz
Gulshan, Dhaka

Rivers in Sylhet

The partition of British India took place in 1947 on the understanding between The Indian Congress and The Muslim League that the province of Punjab and Bengal would be bifurcated based on the religion based concentration of the people.

The then district of Sylhet of the then Assam province was an exception as a referendum was to be held to determine the option of the people. The referendum gave the verdict to join Pakistan. The referendum was based on one simple option "either/or" and there was no way to get the verdict to find any other option. But curiously the Chief of Boundary Commission, Mr. Redcliff, unilaterally apparently with permission from the Governor General, dissected the then biggest subdivision Karimganj mentioning the river Kushiara and gave away the biggest portion of the Karimganj subdivision

and a small area now Zokiganj upazila was left for the then Sylhet district to be a part of East Pakistan. Late Mr. Hamidul Haque Choudhury was in charge of looking after this matter but nothing could be done against the influence exerted by the Congress.

I was a student of class-VIII of the Karimganj Govt High School and had to cross the border and get admitted in a hurriedly erected high school and a hostel at Zakiganj with bamboo and tin structure which enabled me and others to appear in Matriculation Exams in 1949.

My village home is at Ballah on the bank of river Surma. I had seen our family elephants crossing river Surma from north into our village at a river point just west of old Kaliganj Bazar with a few inches dry at their back. This means the water in winter was at least 7 to 8 feet deep. Recently, people in our villages have seen Indian border guards crossing that point on foot with the water hardly two feet deep. Our govt officials or the media people may visit the places during winter to see and take photographs of the siltation that has taken place in the upper side (east) and lower side (west) of the river to present a report to Indian authorities to share the costs of dredging in future and also to stop encroachments. Moreover, it has been reported by our people in the villages that India has constructed small dams and other obsta-

cles in the tributaries of the Surma and this may be another reason for less water coming down into our areas.
Ataf Ahmed Choudhury
B.com., LL.B.
Gulshan-2, Dhaka

Three lane traffic

I have failed to understand how the three lane traffic movement will work if vehicles are categorised like private cars will ply on first lane, buses on middle lane and CNG taxis on third lane.

What I have seen in developed countries is that drivers who intend to take left turn from a main road should stay on left lane, those intending to go straight should stay on middle lane and those intend to take right turn should stay on right lane. Buses that have authorised stoppages on left will definitely have to stay on left lane. No one is allowed to change lanes on busy roads and are liable to be penalised.

The three lane traffic system which Dhaka Metropolitan Police has introduced is bound to cause jams at auto traffic signal crossings when on a green signal a vehicle on right lane tries to take a left turn or tries to take right turn from left lane. I am very sceptical about the three-lane traffic system that the DMP has introduced but still I hope through trial and error traffic discipline will come into force on our roads and highways.

Ziauddin Ahmed
Gulshan-1, Dhaka

New office timings

The recent change in office timings is a good initiative taken by the government primarily to ease traffic congestion in Dhaka city.

Even though it may be too early to comment on the effectiveness of the government initiative, a couple of suggestions, the implementation of which may yield better results.

Commercial organisations: The timing set is from 10.00am to 6.00pm. Commercial organisations work on the "profit motive" and as such, the longer the hours for them, the better they would be and better would be the economy of the country.

Forcing commercial organisations to start work at 10.00am is, on the one hand, stepping into their space of freedom and also cutting them off from countries which are on the East of Bangladesh, by another effective hour.

Monitoring of the timings by the government whether the commercial organisations are adhering to the government directive or not, is also difficult. Thus commercial organisations may keep on following the earlier timing of 9.00am and closing whenever the work finishes.

We would, therefore, have

both government officials and most of commercial organisations going to office at the same time, negating the effectiveness of the change for easing traffic congestion. Commercial organizations should, therefore, in my opinion, follow 9.00am to 5.00pm office timing.

On the contrary government organisations are supposed to work for the public with 'Service Motive'.

If the timing of government office was changed to 10.00am- 6.00pm that may make more sense. It would be much easier to implement. It would be easier for people, who come from surrounding areas to Dhaka, to reach Dhaka in time, finish their work and leave Dhaka in the evening.

MWazirul Alam
Banani, Dhaka

Adulterated paracetamol!

Your court correspondent's front page and important report on the matter published on 24 November indicates the gross slackness and apathy of the prosecution system and the Drug Administration! Was it just negligence or some incentive

from unofficial sources, that encouraged them to remain in the dark, and to calmly ignore this important matter concerning public health and safety?

Will the government enquire into it and punish the concerned officials for their callous indifference?
S.A.Mansoor
Dhaka

Politics

Everything happening around us has something to do with politics. In consideration of this, it is essential to set up different age-levels of curriculum in political education during the course of compulsory education. Likewise in life-long education, it is important to provide adults with some opportunities to learn the rules of democracy, for it is not desirable in an educational setting that democratic rights might recede for the next generation to come. It will be difficult to achieve equality between women and men as long as politicians and bureaucrats without gender sensitivity perspectives occupy influential positions.

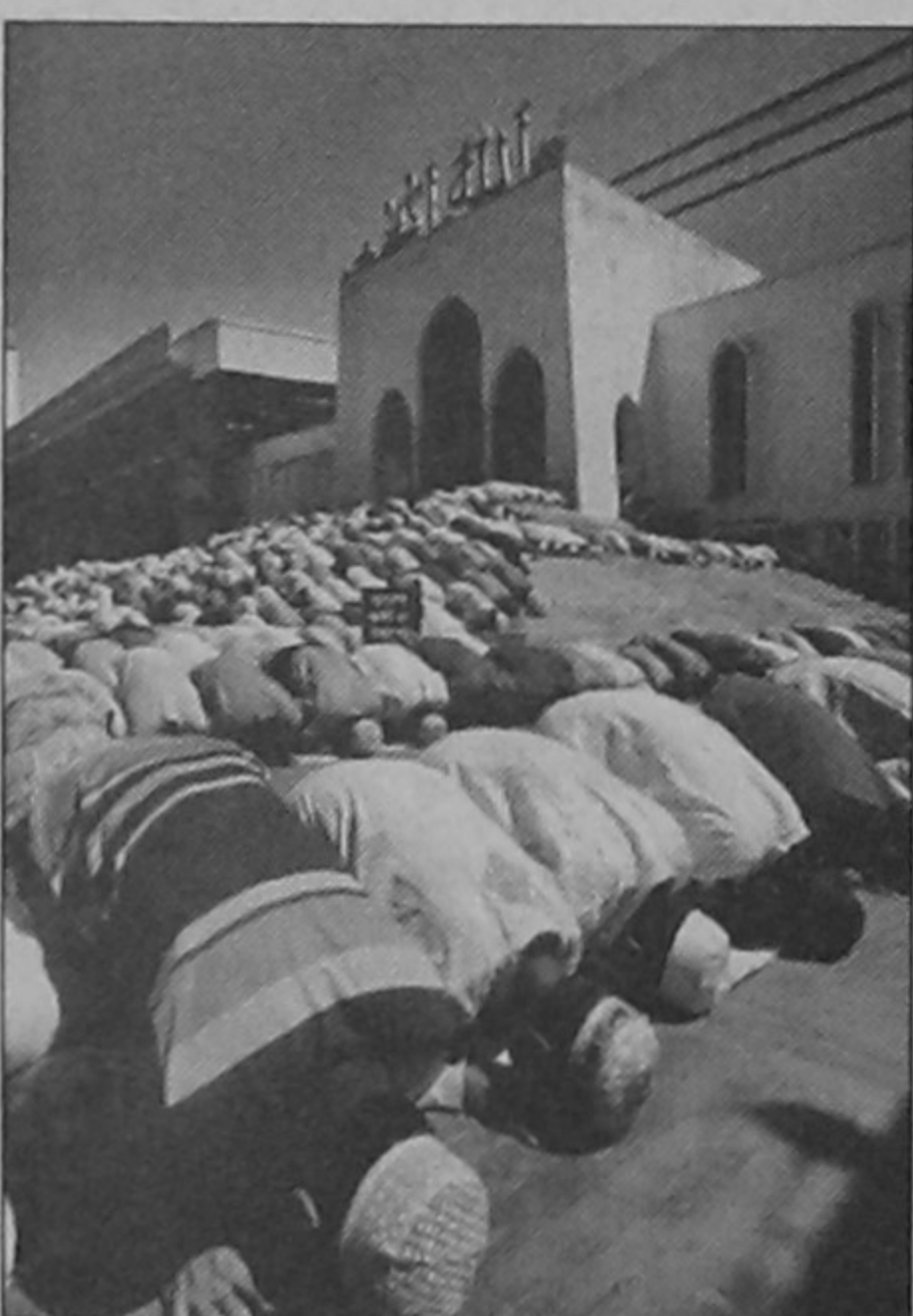
Mohammad Rajja
Member, Nepal student society
Dhaka

Why can't we be united?

We celebrated the biggest festival of the Muslim Ummah throughout the whole country two weeks ago. Eid-ul-Azha brings us together. It lets us show harmony, unity, cooperation and mutual respect to each other irrespective of chaos and broken relationships among people. At least during Eid we tend to invite, welcome and above all receive each other in a warm, decent and sincere way. In fact, most of the people of our country are Muslims and Bangladesh is well known as a liberal country in terms of religion around the world.

It means that people from all religions have no problem in observing or performing their sacred activities. However, as soon as any religious festival is over we seem to have swift changes within ourselves. We become kind of self-seeking and constantly busy satisfying our own interests.

My write up is not to educate or criticise people or a group of individuals. I am a student and like others I come across a question very often that if we can behave well with one another and become so kind, supportive and hospitable during religious occasions such as Eid, Pujja, Christmas, Buddha Purnima etc to each other, so why we can't retain



our mutual respect, unity, determination and good deeds in building the nation towards development, peace, prosperity afterwards...??

Therefore as a spokesperson of the new generation, I would like to request people from all walks of life that lately we observed EID-UL-AZHA in a peaceful manner; let us prolong this momentum.
Shohag Mostafij
MBA: Stream-Strategic & International management (SIM)
University of Dhaka



ONLINE VOICES

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

Tarique made powerful senior vice-chairman

Council empowers Khaleda to pick all other leaders; standing committee expanded, amended charter okayed.
(December 9, 2009)

Khaleda's new empowerment is really paradoxical with respect to Zia's political philosophy or is it? Zia introduced the BNP and the multiparty system, where people's choice would be supreme and thus contrasting himself from the one party system introduced by the AL. However, now we find that his own party members believe in something else or do they really believe the same?
Imran Khan

Most of us who do not believe in party-politics abroad request both the leaders not to encourage the Bengalis in foreign lands to do politics of our homeland, and please cite to them the Indian Model. They do not do party politics abroad. We have-

n't seen any good news on Bangladesh except sports!
Dr M Hossain

Was it a council to establish Zia family reign on BNP or was it for electing the national executive body through voting by BNP rank and file? The Awami League at least selected the general secretary. With so many dedicated senior politicians of good track record, how a controversial person like Tareque could become senior Vice Chairman of a major political party?
Saleque Sufi

This is how one invites destruction... they seem to be learning nothing from the past.
Shafiq

With the decision to have Tarique Zia as Senior Vice President, the BNP just shot itself in the foot!
Reaz Rahman

Too bad for the BNP, too bad for Bangladesh.
Altat

Until and unless Bangladeshis opens eyes and becomes smart enough, the BNP and the Awami League will remain family owned political parties.
Sawgat Chowdhury

Chairperson picking her son for the Vice-chairman position and hand picking leaders for all other positions. Democracy in Bangladesh? We are not educated/ civilized enough for democracy. Let the benevolent dictator rule...
Ronny

It is once again proved that Bangladesh politics cannot go beyond the emotional boundaries. Feudalism has disappeared from the country but in real sense it still exists among families. How helpless and unfortunate a nation we are!
Shimanto

What general people (not biased to any particular party)

think the chairperson never knows. Because they do not travel by bus, they cannot go to any open place like markets.
Sabiha Sultana

The nation is happy to know that a democratic process was followed in selecting the senior vice president by holding the BNP national council. However, it is also a fact that in comparison with Tareque Rahman, many competent and politically mature persons have been working with the BNP since long who could have been selected to that position.
Mayen Uddin Tazim

We were expecting Mr. Arafat Rahman and Mr. Eskander to fill in important positions as well.
A.Choudhury

We need educated, honest, sincere, smart and energetic man/woman to run the BNP and the Awami League. But in our country many leaders of the political parties are not suitable. Therefore, we are not getting good performance from them. So, create the atmosphere and give chance to the better candidates to run the political parties.
Md Ileas Khan