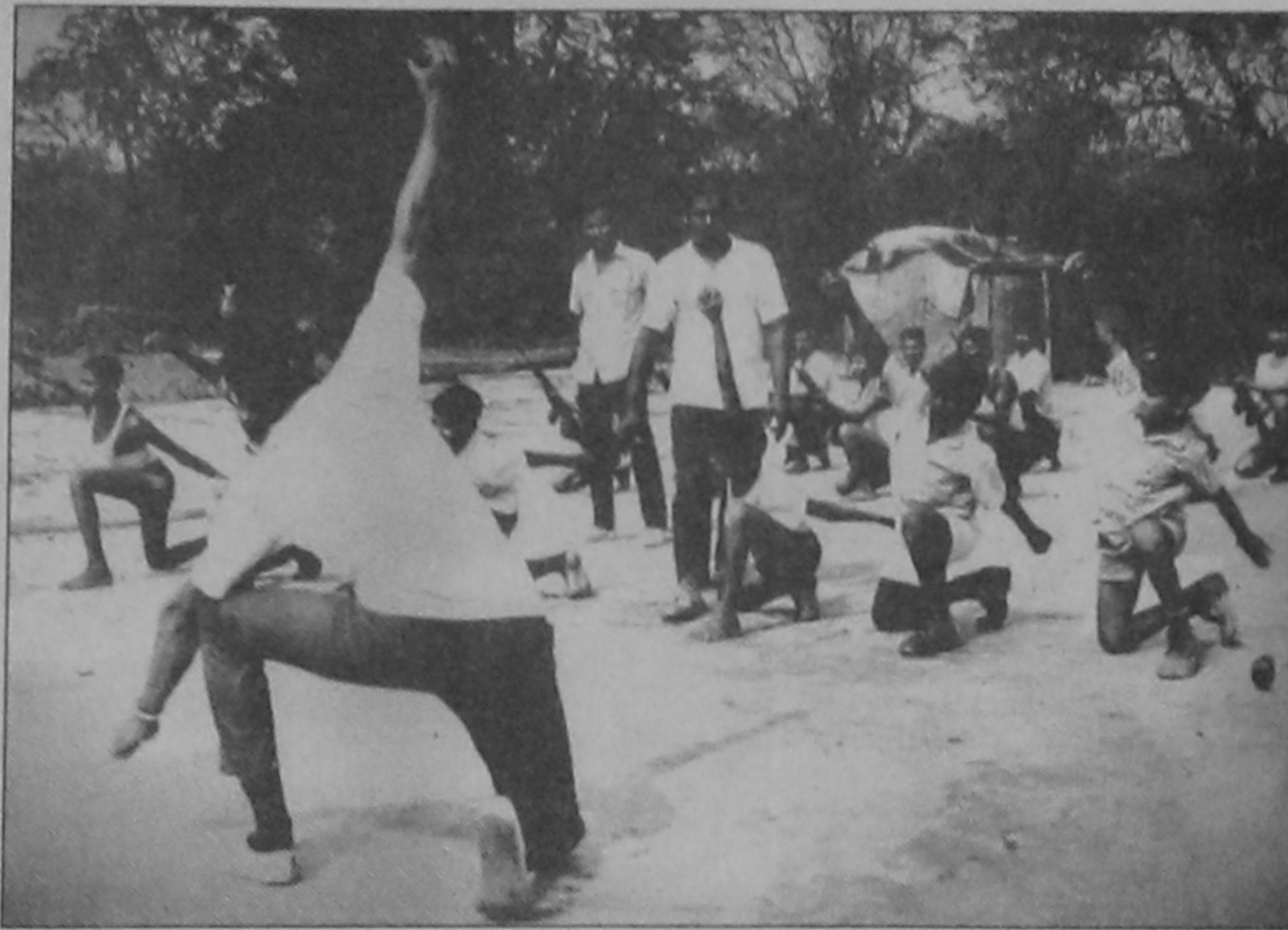




Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

Always invincible!



We know that Bangladesh experienced foreign rule until we achieved complete freedom. In retrospect we see that Bangladesh was under the Palas (750-1030), the Senas (1030-1202/4) and after the Senas the foreign Muslim rule was established. This rule was divided into two periods: Sultanate and Mughal period. During these periods Bangladesh was a province of Delhi, the then capital of the Sultans and the Mughals.

After winning freedom from the

subjugation of the British in 1947, the countrymen wanted a free and sovereign nation for themselves but their dreams were shattered by the Pakistani rulers.

The intrigues and plots did not work for a long time because our ancestors were men of indomitable spirit. They fought for independence and ultimately won it!

Atikur Rahman
Kabi Jasimuddin Hall
Dhaka University

Indo-Bangladesh relationship

Bangladesh has been snubbed by India a number of times since independence. The latest rejection of the Bangladesh proposal to hold a JRC meeting to finalise an agreement on the sharing of Teesta river waters is another example of how India deals with Bangladesh. This agreement is pending since 2005. While India failed to comply with the requirements to finalise the Teesta water agreement, Bangladesh already finalised three agreements, namely: (1) Treaties on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, (2) Transfer of Prisoners and, (3) Bilateral Agreement on Combating International Terrorism.

Unless India realises that international relationship depends on mutual respect, there is very little Bangladesh can do to improve the ties between the two neighbours.
Nuruddin Azam
Australia

Impact of changing climate

The change of climate is now a major global concern. The worst of all the problems that affect all the flora and fauna of our environment is the climate change. There are many plants and animals that are vulnerable to climate change. As a result of increasing temperature, they are likely to be extinct. About 18,000 years ago, the sea level was more than 100 metres lower than today. Over the past century, the level has risen by 10-20cm, probably in response to global warming. The mangrove forests will be affected because of increasing salinity during the winter season and high tides during the monsoon.

Moreover, coastal surges will also raise water level in the area. Therefore all the plants and animals vulnerable to climate change will be affected severely. Due to high salinity, many trees will be eliminated. All the flora and fauna will be affected by salinity of water. We must act to check the rot!

Abdul Azim
Department of English
International Islamic
University Chittagong

No reform

Our immediate past caretaker government of Mr Fakhruddin Ahmed took many reform initiatives on different issues, like corruption, but I really felt very sad to think that he had never taken any steps against any transport companies which violate traffic rules and also fail to give comfortable transport service to the public. This is also true that no other government had really cared about public transport to give a standard transport service.

Student
Independent
University, Bangladesh (IUB)

Nobel Prize for Obama

President Obama has reiterated the necessity of war at the time of receiving the Nobel Peace Prize! All over the world the warlord is subverting the peace process, especially in Palestine, yet he has been awarded the prize for peace. Whata joke!
Nazia Afreen
Muhammadpur
Dhaka

The Nobel Committee may have created two dangerous precedents by giving Nobel Prize for Peace to Obama this year. Firstly, the prize was given not on the basis of what someone achieved but what he promised to achieve and if Obama's actions so far are any guide, he is breaking one promise after the other and staying far from peace. Secondly, his peace prize has come at a time when he is in fact intensifying the war in Afghanistan, with the dubious justification that war brings peace! Even Henry Kissinger, world's meanest war planner, was given the Nobel Peace Prize for stopping the war and not the other way round, in Vietnam!
M. Adil Khan
Brisbane, Australia

DU convocation

The 45th convocation of Dhaka University, the biggest in its history, took place on 12 December, 2009 with more than 9,000 graduates and post graduates getting their degrees in a high emotional state of mind. President Zillur Rahman, Chancellor of Dhaka

University, inaugurated the major convocation programme at the middle of the day, at the university's central sports ground, following playing of the national anthem. The university conferred honorary degrees to three distinguished academics Nobel Laureate chemist Prof Yuan T Lee, inventor of the Sono arsenic filter Abul Hussam as well as Indian historian Prof Ranajit Guha. Mr. Lee received his honorary degree physically. Mr. Hussam, an ex-DU student and Mr. Guha could not attend at the ceremony. Amongst the students in receipt of certificates, 4,203 were graduates, 1,328 post graduates and 58 MPhil holders plus 58 PhD holders. The university has assumed this is the largest convocation in terms of number of graduates along with guests. Dhaka University was established in 1921. Its first convocation was held in 1923.

However, the biggest convocation of the DU was celebrated in a befitting manner. The graduating students' joy knew no bounds. They joined rally, photo session, listened to convocation speeches by the speakers and the whole campus had a festive look. Numerous students were found busy taking photos with their long cherished certificate from the Oxford of the East. The orators gave spectacular speeches.

The Convocation speaker Nobel laureate Yuan T Lee said the scientists should work mutually and split knowledge, fresh technological options and the inadequate resources available to solve the problems crosswise the world. He

also mentioned that we must work collectively as a group of people to find innovative sustainable ways to re-establish a warm relation with nature and return to a more straight relationship with the mighty power of the sun. Professor Abul Hussam, whose written speech was read out at the convocation, called upon the politicians and academicians to capture any action that might depoliticise academic institutions. On an average, every student lost 2 years of his life and this is happening over at least 30 years. As a result, lot of money (your parent's money), and national property were simply wasted, he said. Hussam said, "I urge the politicians and academicians to undertake the courageous decision to do whatever it takes to depoliticise our academic environment and challenge the young people to perform at their highest potential." He also criticized the authorities for not providing quality education to the students.

There is no denying the fact that ever since its inception, Dhaka University has been producing the brightest and finest graduates in the country. So, those who were the participants of the biggest convocation of DU are expected to take necessary preparations with a view to building the nation towards growth and prosperity.
Shohag Mostafij
MBA: Stream-Strategic & International Management (SIM)
University of Dhaka

City of opportunity?

Prof. Nazrul Islam, Chairman of the University Grants Commission, has said that Dhaka is the city of opportunity. This opportunity brings misfortune for the city as well as for the city dwellers. In the last two or three decades, the population here has increased four times. At present more than one crore and thirty lakh people live in Dhaka city. To meet the needs of this citizens, the city is losing its capacity. Water crisis, load shedding, traffic jam are now acute.

These issues need to be addressed in right earnest.
Raju Kumar Das
Business Administration
Shah Jalal University of Science & Technology, Sylhet

Destroying forests to make bricks!

Your correspondent's report along with the photograph, published in your pages on 9 December, graphically confirms the saying that "Power corrupts and absolute powers corrupts absolutely!" The report identifies an AL leader of Chakoria upazila in Cox's Bazar and his partner, who have set up a brickfield in prohibited reserve forest area of Uchitar Beel. It seems that the forest officials and the local district administration are unable, or scared, to take any punitive action against them, since they belong to the party in power, and possibly connected with local goons!

This is an outrageous example of misuse of power by the Awami League!

The Hon. Prime Minister's attention must be drawn to this, even if the district authorities (may be for their safety) have not officially brought this to the notice of higher authorities! A brickfield cannot just disappear overnight. The Hon. PM should send a team of two persons, one a strong central AL leader and another a senior government official to investigate the matter at the earliest, and if necessary take exemplary punitive action against these party men who are spoiling the name of the party! This will add to the PM's and the party's image.

It will also be appreciated if your newspaper follows up this matter and reports on it, so that we can be aware of the steps taken by the administration, to stop such illegal activities by unscrupulous AL men.
Awelwisher
Dhaka

Good step

The increase of population has turned to be a thought-provoking issue in this present Bangladesh and it is reckoned to be a 'Future Explosion'.

So, when this condition exists in Bangladesh, the present government has taken a big step to minimize the population within 2015 by promulgating that each couple should take not more than one child. Later on, if the rule is applied the child will get lots of opportunities in his or her academic life or profession.

We should go forward with a view to implementing it, so that our children get the opportunities that they deserve.

Bipra Kanungo
Momin Road
Chittagong

False certificates

A very important report was published in a Bangla daily on 11 December about false certificates of Dhaka university. In the report it was stated that hundreds of people are using such false certificates and working in different government and non-government organisations in the country and abroad.

Recently, more than 50 certificates were found false as several organisations have sent more than 500 certificates for checking by Dhaka University.

It is no more a matter of joke. By indulging in such activities in the university, the cheats are doing a great disservice to the university itself. The authorities should take drastic action to stop forging of certificates.
Mahmud Ali Kabir
EX-BSS correspondent
Gopalganj

Dirty city

I was watching the BBC news channel the other morning when the Copenhagen Summit was being reported. It was also reported that Dhaka is one of the dirtiest cities in the world. This credit should go to the incompetence and sheer laziness of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC). Dhaka has gone below standard just like the great minds of the DCC.

However, whenever I enter the Dhaka Cantonment area, I feel that I have left Dhaka and entered Singapore. If the Bangladesh Army can keep their neighbourhood so clean, neat and tidy, then maybe the entire DCC should be dissolved and the city sanitation and well-being responsibilities be given to the armed forces.

I also feel that Dhaka has enough waste which could be re-cycled and transformed into usable energy.
Aminur Rahim
New DOHS, Mohakhali
Dhaka

Student politics

Student politics had a golden time in the past, but nowadays student politics has lost its glory.

Therefore, it is my earnest request to those students who are involved in politics and leading political parties to refrain from the activities that spoil the academic atmosphere of the universities.
Mohammed Jamal Uddin
Dept. of English
International Islamic
University Ctg.

Population control policy

The government is going to draft a policy to introduce 'single child family' at national level by 2015. This is welcome news. It is a belated decision, but better late than never. The population boom in Bangladesh is a serious socio-economic issue. If implemented and accepted by all of us, it will no doubt benefit the country to tackle many problems relating to socio-economic development, health issues and global warming etc.

But in this respect I would like to say that instead of single child families 'two children families' would be a better option because only one child in a family

sometimes feels lonely and becomes an introvert, unsocial and feels uneasy interacting with others. This I have seen in many families. Then again such a child may become obstinate and spoiled because of too much love, care and pampering of parents and relatives. They become little Hitlers in their families. There are many instances in China where these problems are seen. So, the government should consider all the factors in taking a final decision on this issue.

Sultana Zaman
On e-mail



PHOTO: AMIRUL RAJIV

Help the developing nations

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon's warning that nature does not negotiate with us is most relevant. To end the stalemate and move forward in Copenhagen, developing countries like India and China should agree on an international verification regime for carbon intensity cuts that they have unilaterally declared.

Rich nations, including the US, must agree unconditionally on drastic emission cuts. They certainly owe a climate debt to the world, which they must repay in the form of massive funding for developing nations. It will not be feasible for the developing world to move to cleaner sources of energy, unless the developed world facilitates it through technology transfer.

Avik Sengupta
Biochemistry
McGill University
Montreal, Canada

Nuclear power

As a nuclear engineer, I appreciate Engr. S.A. Mansoor's promotion of Pebble Bed Reactors (PBRs) for heat or power generation (Dec. 13). It is one of the six concepts being investigated for Generation IV reactors (current reactors operating round the world being of the Generation II and III type). Generation IV reactors are not expected to be available for commercial operation before 2030.

Although promising in principle, the PBR has significantly less production scale experience than Light Water Reactors (LWRs). The two PBRs (15 Mwe and 300 Mwe) in Germany were shut down in late 1980s and the South African demonstration project has been indefinitely postponed due to financial constraints. On the other hand, of the 436 reactors currently operating world-wide, 356 reactors are LWRs. Since Bangladesh should invest in a proven technology, the decision of the present government to negotiate with Russia for a proven Generation III type LWR is a step in the right direction.

Incidentally, Mr. Mansoor may note that both PBR and LWR use U-235 as reactor fuel. U-236 does not occur in nature and cannot be used as a reactor fuel as it is not a fissionable material. U-238 is a fertile material that is converted into a fissionable material (Pu-239) when bombarded with neutrons in a reactor.

Engr. ABM Nurul Islam
Gulshan-2, Dhaka

BNP and Tarique

How can we support a political party whose chief is Tarique Rahman or going to be the next chairperson? It indicates that the BNP is not a democratic party. Can you cite me a single example of Tarique's contribution for our nation or our country? How come the

top leaders of the BNP nod their heads and accept him as their party chief? Thanks to general mass of Bangladesh that they rejected rightly not to choose this party in the last election. People got the lesson, but not the BNP still on the wrong track!
Nazakat
On e-mail

Rickshaw issue

Though redundant, this is a long debated issue. The ominous flooding of the city by rickshaws is one glaring example of how both the DCC and the govt can be shamefully indifferent to our rural unemployment problem. Yes, that the rural people are not starving to death is not because of the govt's good planning or programmes but because they have learnt to survive.

The rickshaw problem in the city will never go because just as parents of a dozen children never care for their feeding and leave them to their own fate, thus absolving themselves of the 'sin' of bringing so many hungry mouths in this world, so do our governments leave the rural unemployed population to their own fate - say for the easiest self-employment by rickshaw pulling because they don't have either willingness or vision to provide rural employment opportunities.

Therefore, rickshaws are never to come down in number. Rest assured our rheumatic brothers and sisters who do not even bother to take a few steps to the foot overbridges, despite the great risk of getting overrun on the road.
M. Shawkat Ali
Uttara, Dhaka

Poor decisions

A few days back, I read a report that the present government was going to change the name of "Zia International Airport" to Hazrat Shah Jalal (RA) Airport. This is not quite unexpected news for me since Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina plays the name game when she is in power. The perfect example is "PG Hospital" which was changed to "Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Hospital". Secondly, the name of "Zia Uddyan" and "Chandrima Uddyan" were changed.

Third is Bangabandhu Novo Theatre, instead of "Moulana Bhashani Novo Theatre". Fourth is Bangabandhu Stadium.

My question is why is she playing with these names? Why is she emphasizing these narrow things, rather than development of our economy? We are still buying commodities with high prices, no jobs, no manpower export, no security etc.

I personally believe that both leaders are great. There should not be any question if we put the names of those leaders.

Md. Abdul Wahab
Student (BBA Internship)
Independent University,
Bangladesh

World Cup Cricket venue

The people of Bangladesh are happy to learn that the historic opening ceremony of the 14-Nation World Cup Cricket-2001 will be held at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in Dhaka.

It is reported that the proposed World Cup matches will be at Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Dhaka and Zahur Ahmed Choudhury Stadium in Chittagong, while Narayanganj Osmani Stadium and Sheikh Naser Stadium in Khulna, have been kept as alternative venues.

Bangladesh will host two quarter-finals and six group stage matches.

It is surprising to learn that there is no such historic venue at Rajshahi, old divisional headquarters, consisting of a total of sixteen districts in the neglected northern region of our country, where there are two stadiums, including the large newly constructed divisional stadium.

I on be half of the people of this northern region, including sports-fans and others, earnestly request the World Cup Cricket-2011 and the International Cricket Council authorities, and our democratic government to include Rajshahi as a venue for this great event.

Mohammad Anwarul Quadir
LLB
Advocate and Journalist
Masterpara, Chakdev
Naogaon

BTRC and business

Rumours are making rounds that BTRC is planning some unfair activities for future licence issuance to "please" the vested quarters.

It has been decided by the government that licences will be given for sub-marine and terrestrial links to be established through India. Two companies which are not part of telecom business are reportedly trying to grab this licence without undergoing the competitive and transparent process.

Mohammed Belayat Hossain
Luxmi Bazar, Dhaka

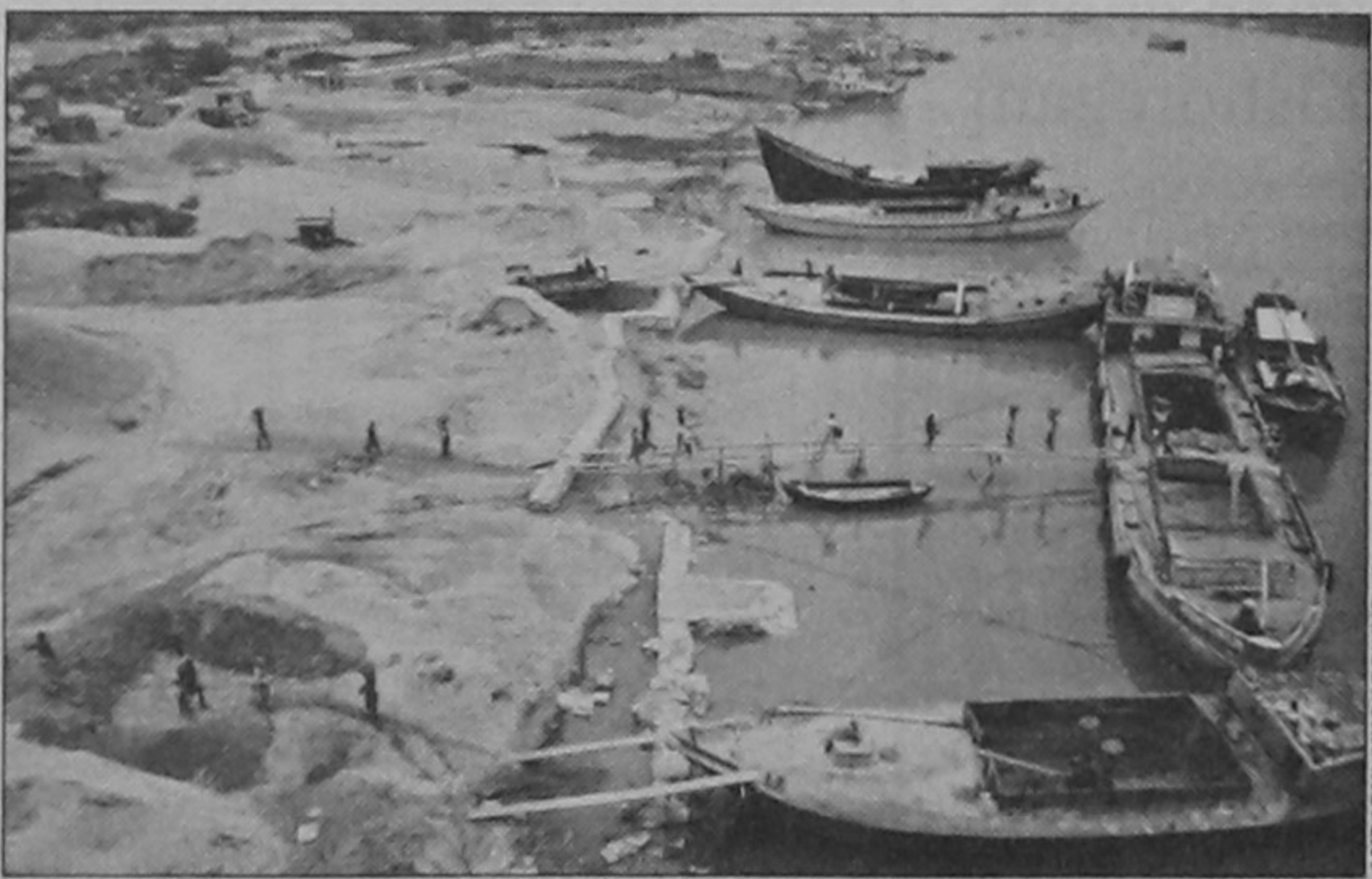
A question

The Muslims, world over, know that the Battle of Badr was the first and the most glorious battle ever fought in the name of Allah, the Merciful. For the first time the followers of the new faith were put to a serious test. This battle proved to be a milestone in the history of Islam which ushered in the dawn of a new religion, Islam, the youngest of all and the fastest in its following. The victory of Badr was spectacular, 313 Muslims defeated a large army of 950 men.

Of late, time and again, I come across the word 'Badr' being used to brand a group of people who opposed the independence of Bangladesh in 1971. This word should not be used to describe the war criminals.

Saleh Mohammad Ayub
Kalabagan, Dhaka

Save our rivers



ABDUL HUI/DRINKNEWS

Our country is home to a number of rivers. But what is shameful is that our rivers are grabbed by land grabbers and polluted by the industries. Buriganga, Balu, Shitalakhyia and Turag are ecologically critical to this country, but they are in hapless state. Not only these rivers, other rivers are also in poor condition, like our Padma has dried up because of the Farakka Barrage built by India.

Our leaders are in Copenhagen for the climate change conference. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is also taking part in the conference. I think she knows very well about the bad conditions of our rivers.

The government has rightly decided to save our rivers. But can we do it in time? We must!

Ahnaaf Ahmad
The Aga Khan School
Uttara, Dhaka