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Ship breaking industry



WAHID ADNANI / DRINKNEWS

Bangladesh is dependent on ship breaking for its domestic steel requirements. The ship breaking industry is not subject to any environmental laws or health and safety regulations for workers. The Chittagong ship-breaking yard is a highly polluted coastal belt of 20 km. The number of accidents and casualties at the yard is believed to be the highest in the region. Workers cut steel plates continuously without eye protection. They don't wear uniforms, protective gloves or boots.

High concentrations of oil were found in water and sediments. Soil samples show high levels of toxic substances such as heavy metals, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) & Tributyltin (TBT). Most fishermen in the region were forced to change their profession. They migrated or found a job in and around the ship-breaking yard.
Nazmus Sakib
Student
Geography & Environmental Studies
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Global warming and warning

Many attempts, suggestions and speeches have been made at Copenhagen in order to decrease global warming around the world. It is a common issue today. The intellectuals from different corners of the world have interacted on the issue of changes going on in the world's atmosphere. My plain question is, are we all aware of these issues? I mean, why the nature changes, why temperature rises etc. It is due to globalisation, deforestation, urbanization etc.

If we look at our own country, we can see that still we are harming our nature by continuing unnatural practices. We think about our own interest-cutting out trees, building more apartments, digging down and down in search of water, unplanned use of technology etc. which gradually affect the nature.

Let us raise our voice, save our country and ensure our existence in future!
Md. Zahidul Islam Zibon
Dept. of English
International Islamic
University Chittagong

Good move

At last, the government has taken the right decision to go back to the previous time that is Bangladesh Standard time (BST), changing the controversial DST. BST was effective from 1st January.

In this winter it is really absurd and illogical to follow the DST system. People of all walks of life have been suffering since the beginning of the winter. I am sure everybody, particularly school kids, would be pleased as they were the worst victims of DST system.

In fine, I would like to thank the government for this good move, belated though.
Mohammad Zia-ul-Haque
Eng. department
International Islamic
University Ctg.

Fake phensidyl?

The news, with the headline "Fake Phensidyl factory in city busted", was published in the front page of your newspaper on 25 December, which drew my attention.

Indeed, phensidyl has become a popular item for addicts, and is taking away money, lives and happiness from families. The whole country is affected. Fake phensidyl is even more harmful for human body. Taking fake phensidyl can lead to instant death.

The law enforcers have been so active to continue the drive against both original(!) and fake phensidyl and its users. It is good news, and I, as a conscious citizen, appreciate it very much and also hope that the drive will be continued to unearth and demolish fake phensidyl factories.

Mahmud Ali Kabir
Ex-BSS correspondent
Gopalganj

Traffic rule violation

A comment on the subject was published on the last day of the last year, which was a matter of shame. Hopefully, it was the energy adviser's last 'sin' of 2009! Illogically, however, one may say in his defence that as a conscientious energy adviser, he was conserving energy and saving fuel by taking a short cut by driving on the wrong traffic lane! Maybe, he was also saving valuable time, knowing fully well, that "time is money".

Regarding morality, the less said the better, as he reflects the norm of the higher echelon of Bangladesh society. Simply put, the higher you go up the administrative ladder of responsibility, the more you can ignore morality, which is indeed a sad truth in Bangladesh. We always preach morality to our juniors and youngsters all the time. Often enough, we do not practice what we preach! After all, we all love authority without responsibility!

Another parallel, moral-wise, is the higher you go up, the more you can disregard norms and rules. As the popular saying goes: "rules are for fools"! It is meant for ordinary people doing ordinary work! Rulers make rules. What they do however, is their personal rule, not meant for all those who are ruled! Here we can say that unlike democracy, rules are made "by the rulers, for the ruled". The rulers are out of its bounds! After all, they are so busy making rules, hence short cuts and disregarding rules for them is just an ordinary event, to be ignored by us--the ruled!

We should "see no evil, hear no evil and do no evil", that must be the fundamental rule for us, take it or leave it!
S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

One-eleven in retrospect

Like many, I welcomed the change on January 11, 2007. In spite of lot of criticisms, I don't repent my support. One-eleven was not a political adventure of any ambitious army official, rather it was a reality stemming out of the political arrogance of the BNP reflected through unconstitutional moves of the then President Mr. Iajuddin Ahmed. Had there been no such change on that day the country could have remained in a state of constant political agitation. Hawa Bhaban style plundering coupled with complete politicisation of the administration could have put the state in total disarray.

The caretaker government performed well in many fields. But they should not have expanded their agenda so much.

Even then, the nation should thank the CTG and their backers for their timely intervention and for saving the country from complete ruination.
M. Sanaul Huq
Uttara, Dhaka

BNP's role in Copenhagen

Yet another DS editorial today, 26th December, after the editorial last week on BNP's attendance in parliament. The DS is one of the most neutral dailies and we sincerely value its comments. I hope the chairperson of BNP and the party's top leaders will at least read the editorial, even if they do not agree with the paper.

In chorus with the DS, I would like to remind the BNP in my own language that the days of criticism for the sake of criticism for befooling the people with slogans like "tidal bore of development" will not work any more. Since one-eleven three years have elapsed, the people of three years back are not the same in 2010. They have changed a lot and have become more difficult for the politicians to befool by criticising their adversaries with cheap, false, fabricated story telling.

The Copenhagen climate change conference to tackle its effects was an international one and its main players were the carbon emitters themselves who have now realised that not only a few poor countries like Bangladesh will be seriously affected, but they themselves will be affected. While the US President has admitted that the conference outcome was insufficient, our former prime minister found 'inefficiencies' of the AL govt. It was merely a criticism for the sake of criticism.

She and her party men forgot that the Copenhagen conference was an international forum and was not for bilateral negotiations. In difficult days, many people get lost like she is lost now.
Shafiqul Islam, NY

Smoking

Smoking is a very bad habit. It is also dangerous for health, the environment and climate. Smoking causes cancer, heart attack, chronic bronchitis and some other fatal diseases. It damages brain and lungs. It

also harms the nerves and sometimes spoils character. People addicted to smoking lose their appetite for food and energy for work.

Moreover, it wastes a lot of money. Smoking is so dangerous for a non-smoker. As a non-smoker, we can't bear this kind of odour in open places. The law against smoking must be enforced strictly.
Md. M.H. Manik
M.C. College, Sylhet

Drug addiction & investigation

Drug addiction has now become one of the major problems of our society. Many youngsters, students are falling victim to this deadly menace. As a result, the future of these youngsters is ruined. They also shatter their parents' dreams. Once they take it, they are caught in the death trap.

So, first we have to fight against the drug traders. The dishonest traders smuggle the deadly narcotics and drugs in through the borders of the country. They have a strong network. Sometimes the traders are caught red-handed by the law enforcement agencies but the key men remain invisible in most of the cases.

To sell or transport drugs, the drug traders usually use poor children and women. The law enforcement agencies should play an effective role in containing the drug and narcotics trade.
Repon
CU

Taliban slaughtering Pakistanis

It is said that in a madhouse, sanity is the most hated behaviour. In this sense, Pakistan is essentially a madhouse where everyone is trying to out do each other in madness. The Taliban claim to be Muslims and yet they are slaughtering Pakistanis who are supposed to be Muslims as well. The Pakistan army is supposed to protect the people. And yet it is not capable or even unwilling to stop daily bombings by the Taliban as its eyes are fixed on fighting a war with India. But the greatest madness is that Pakistanis continue to blame India and America for the mass murders by the Taliban.

Most people in Pakistan are victims of their blind hatred for India and America. Instead of blaming the Taliban for daily bombings, they see in it the hands of India and America. As Gul Bokhari, a columnist for Dawn, wrote recently: "One comes across a staggering number of people who are unwilling to look inward, instead of placing all the blame on any combination of the CIA, the Federal Reserve, Mossad, RAW, the U.S. etc. ... Victims of whom, though? Not of themselves, not even in part, but of the perfect villain (the US, Israel, India...), they are told by our local demagogues. The reason? Pakistan is a Muslim country, and all the villains are waging a war against Islam."

Most Pakistanis fail to see that India knows that the Pakistan army will not dare to attack India because a far more powerful Indian army will trounce it in a matter of weeks. But terrorists like Taliban/ Lashkar-e-Taiba are invisible forces of darkness and cannot be defeated by any military operation. This is why India didn't strike at Pakistan after the Mumbai terrorist attack by Pakistan-based Lashkar. India is more worried

about the Pakistan army using these terrorist outfits against India. As Indian journalist Indrani Bagchi wrote in The Times of India after Mumbai: "A belligerent and muscular Indian response will weaken the civilian government's hold on Pakistan and create space for the military to take centre stage. That cannot be good for India in the long term." It is Pakistan army's collusion with terrorist groups that poses a threat to India's security.

This explains why the Taliban are slaughtering Pakistanis because they can inflame anti-Indian/American sentiments among Pakistanis who will blame India for the mass murders by Taliban. With the majority of Pakistanis blinded by their insane hatred towards India and America, the Taliban are having a free hand to slaughter Pakistanis.
Mahmood Elahi
Ottawa, Canada

DST

Digital time that means daylight saving time (DST) which started on 19 June 2009 has given a new lease of life. This means office and business start and close earlier than they used to. The system was introduced to save electricity for the evening. So far, the government has not informed exactly how much benefit has been achieved by introducing the DST. So, the DST timetable since its inception spelt a lot of suffering for the ordinary people.

The scheme should be abandoned, once and for all.
Mamun
Department of Geography
and Environmental Studies
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Khaleda's conspiracy theories

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia is continuously alerting the people about some conspiracies being hatched against the country. The latest alert came when she was addressing a delegation from the Christian community on the occasion of Christmas, the previous one was during the last Eid-ul-Azha. The occasions she had chosen are both holy and also of joy and celebrations, yet she did deliver a message of fear alongside the message of goodwill to the people.

Fear is a common enemy of mankind, because it creates a sense of insecurity in human mind. The insecurity created by the fear of unknown also creates instability in both private and public life of people. In contemporary politics conspiracy theories are not very popular, in this age of information it is becoming an unwanted thing. Scaring people about something which does not exist or is unfounded, and blaming others for that, is not acceptable in any modern society.

Khaleda Zia is asking people to remain watchful about the conspiracies being hatched without referring to any particular event. As the leader of the opposition and a former prime minister, Mrs. Zia should know who are doing it for what purpose, and in what manner. After all, she is asking the people to be vigilant. Therefore, it is her duty to spell everything out clearly before the people.
AK Shamsuddin
Mississauga, Canada

Beautiful beach, but...

It is often said that Cox's Bazar has great potential to be a leading tourist destination for foreign visitors to Bangladesh. Recently some business contacts of mine, who are Europeans, visited the area but left with a sour taste in their mouth.

Whilst they all agreed that the beach was most impressive, they did not enjoy the undue attention from some local residents. As they sat on their beach chairs, enjoying the view, a large group of local men formed a semi-circle

around them and continued to stare and point for some time. Some of them proceeded to film female members of the visiting party with their mobile phone cameras. In the end, this constant harassment led them to abandon the idea of staying in the beach, and they departed for their hotel rooms.

If we cannot treat our valued guests with the respect they deserve how can we ever encourage foreign visitors?
Iqbal Islam Chowdhury
Dhaka



MOHAMMAD ISLAM / DRINKNEWS

Pensioner's plight

The government has failed to do justice to the POOR OLD pensioners.

The government may look into the website for "Indian 6th Central Pay Commission Report" where on page 334 item 5.1.34 it is stated that as per their Supreme Court judgment on Writ petition No. 3958-61 of 1983 orders were issued for RESTORING the Commuted amount of Pension after 15 years.

Our government is requested to review and Cancel the 2009 Pay Scale and set up a new separate PENSION Commission and Pay Commission to ensure justice to all.
AM Shahabuddin Khan
Dhaka

Goodbye to English?

The Textbook, namely English For Today, meant for the HSC students contains 24 units. Each unit contains several lessons. At the end of each lesson there are some questions which require the students to work in "pairs" and "groups". In fact communicative method of language teaching requires the students and teachers to take part in such activities.

We wonder if the authors of the said textbook are alive to the real life classroom situation of our colleges. Whereas the language experts assert that an ideal classroom consists of some 50 students, a classroom of our college may accommodate four times of the said figure or even more. So here the perennial gap between theory and practice is evident as in many other fields.

As the contents of the textbooks do not correspond to the question papers of the respective boards, the students and even teachers are using guidebooks. These guidebooks are full of types, faulty sentences and shoddy pieces of compositions and very few students even carry the textbooks to the class-

room. In the name of communicative English, we have said a hasty goodbye to English!
Zabed Wali
Pahartali, Chittagong

Trap the monster!

The ACC must feel like fighting a monster in its effort to curb corruption. To kill this monster, all sane people should unite and make themselves a separate force, big enough to hem the monster round and force it to a trap placed by the ACC!

To dislodge the monster, Sheikh Hasina must address the nation warning the ogre that enough is enough. We think only Sheikh Hasina has the position and public support to do this gargantuan task. But if she fails this time, the monster will get a new lease of life.
Tinku
One-mail

Drug sensitivity test

Drug resistance is a familiar term to many of us. The drug resistant bacteria develop or acquire techniques to bypass the action of antibiotics. When the bacteria develop this protective mechanism against many antibiotics, they are generally termed as multi-drug resistant bacteria. But a certain type of bacteria usually doesn't have resistance mechanism against all available antibiotics, rather this mechanism is developed against most frequently used antibiotics.

So, the success rate of treatment depends on the choice of the appropriate antibiotic to which the pathogenic bacteria is sensitive. Drug sensitivity test provides information about which antibiotics are still effective and which are not. In this test, pathogenic bacteria are isolated from the specimens such as blood, sputum, stool etc and then the bacteria are tested against numerous antibiotics. The antibiotics that can effectively inhibit growth of bacteria in test media are considered as effective antibiotic.

In absence of drug sensitivity test, antibiotics are prescribed alternatively one after another or antibiotics of different groups are prescribed at time. This practice may arise the problems such as:

The selection of drug on trial and error basis may take many days, even weeks. The infectious disease might be of such kind that if appropriate antibiotic therapy is not initiated, the disease conditions may deteriorate rapidly. Prescribing many antibiotics at a time for the same indications increases the risk of diseases of our vital organs such kidney impairment etc.

Drug sensitivity test thus ensures the success of treatment. But this test takes at least three days to complete. ICDDR, many hospitals, diagnostic centres and many other organisations have facilities for doing this test.
Nihar Ranjan Ray
MSc (Microbiology)
Exresearch officer, ICDDR,B

Natural gas

Electricity and fertiliser production is fully dependent on natural gas. But it is misused in different ways, especially in the fuel sector. The demand of electricity is increasing day by day.

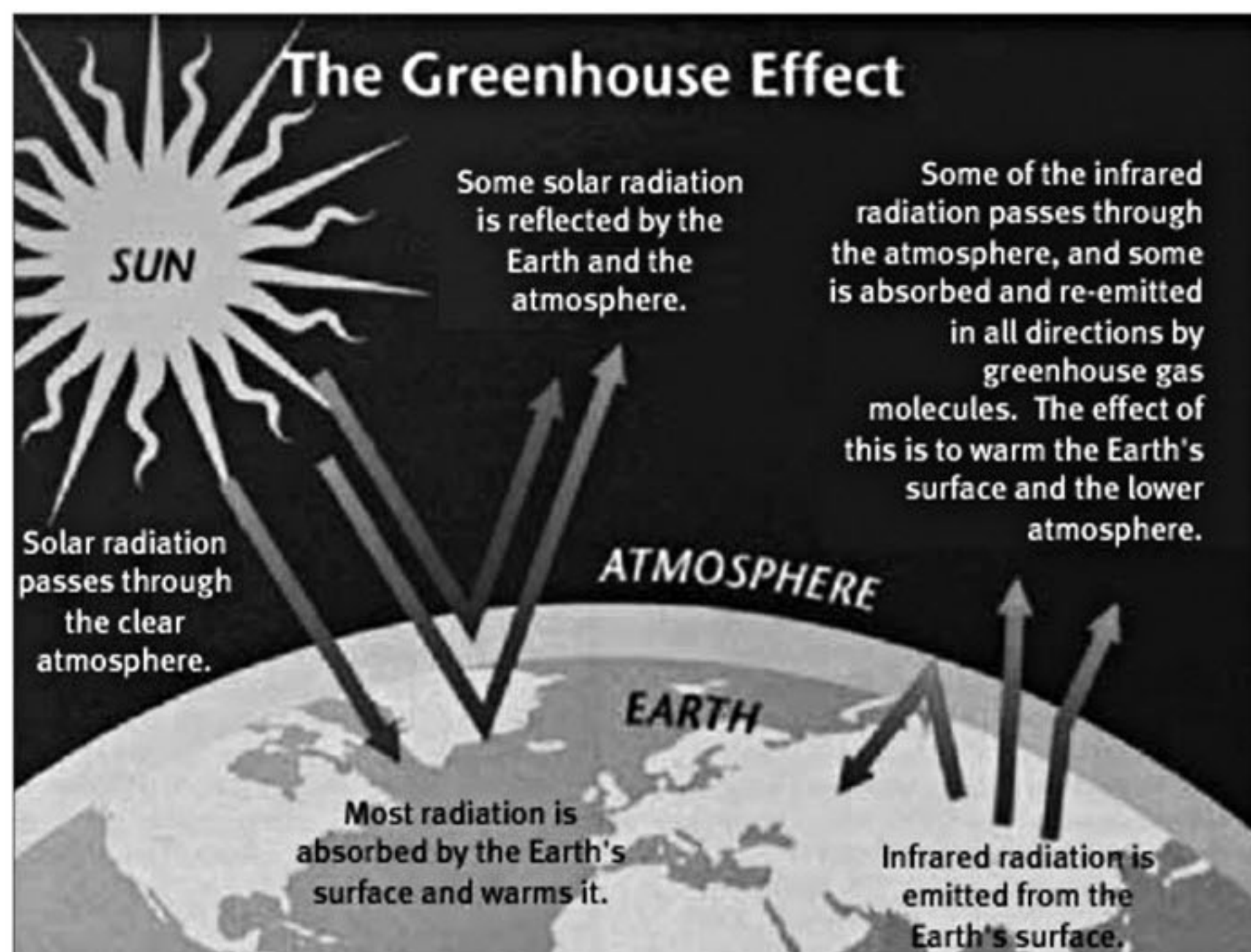
Are we doing anything to face an acute shortage of gas in future?
Md. Tanjil
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Cricket

Our batsmen are still throwing away their wickets. The ODI against the Lankans was lost when they were four down for a measly 70 odd runs. Still, Ashraful tried to give it a respectable look. He played sensible cricket, for a change!

However, the most enjoyable part of it was some lusty hitting by the fearless Nayeem in the last over of the match. It's great going!
Cricketlover
Dhaka

Greenhouse Gases



Many of the challenges we face, from poverty to armed conflict, are linked to the effects of global warming and Climate Change. Now we are finding solution to the climate change problem. Some scientists are now warning that the sea level could rise by up to two meters by 2100. We must cut emissions of Green House Gases (GHGs) as well as carbon dioxide (CO₂). According to the Kyoto Protocol (1997), the combination of Carbon Dioxide, Methane, Nitrous oxide, Hydro-fluorocarbons and Per-fluorocarbons sulfur hex fluoride is called Green House Gases (GHGs). The carbon dioxide accounts for more than sixty percent of total Green House Gases (GHGs) emissions.

Carbon dioxide enters the atmosphere through the burning of fossil fuels (oil, natural gas, and coal), solid

waste, trees and wood products, and also as a result of other chemical reactions (e.g. manufacture of cement, iron and steel production, ammonia production and urea combustions etc. Methane is emitted during the production and transport of coal, natural gas, and oil. Methane emissions also result from livestock and other agricultural practices and by the decay of organic waste in municipal solid waste landfills.

Nitrous oxide is emitted during agricultural and industrial activities, as well as during combustion of fossil fuels and solid waste.

The developed countries have not done much for the Most Vulnerable Countries (MVCs) which include Bangladesh. They must improve their performance in this respect.
Mohammad Mizanur Rahman
Botanist and Researcher