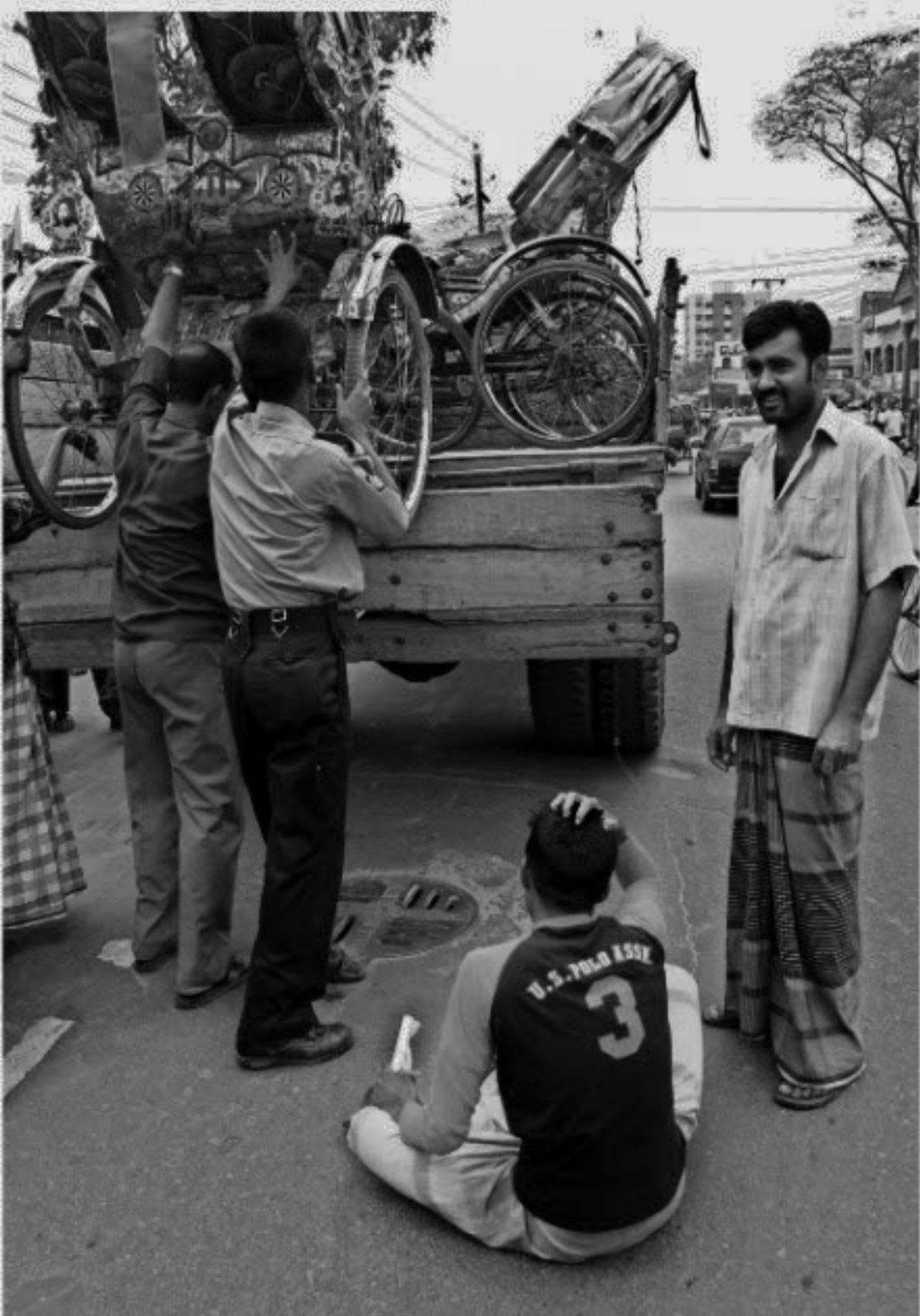


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

Your worst nightmare

Enough has appeared in the newspapers about motorized vehicles i.e. cars to make us aware of their "benefits" they crowd the roads with 7 times their capacity, they occupy 50-60% of road space, they carry only 2-5% of passengers, they park here, there and everywhere with impunity, they are mollicodded with hundreds of crores of expensive electronic toys just to ease the passage of empty/half-empty cars, they pollute the air and deafen the people, they kill or maim hundreds of pedestrians, they drain out foreign exchange and



LITON RAHMAN / DRINKNEWS

inflate the egos of the nouveau riche.

Rickshaws/rickshaw vans carry over 50% of people and goods. Occupy only 30-40% of road space, do not pollute while providing a livelihood to 20-25 lakh poor people. Yet it is they who get blamed for causing traffic jams and are banned from so-called VIP roads without any effect on the jams. Let us imagine a Dhaka without rickshaws and vans:

1. Attendance in schools will drop by 50%, leading to illiteracy and all its ill-effects on the economy.
2. Attendance in offices, shops, bazaars etc will drop by another 50% to paralyze the economy.
3. CNGs and buses will raise their fares and become even more selective.
4. Prices will rise and availability fall, of all food-stuffs and household goods as their movement from factory/wholesaler/retailer is restricted.
5. More pedestrians will obstruct roads causing more accidents.
6. Thousands of small shops, grocers, service providers etc will down shutters due to high cost of transporting goods and non-availability of customers.
7. Most important, the honest livelihood to nearly 25 lakh rickshaw related people and their families will be endangered causing social upheaval.

Experts, I am sure, will be able to give dozens of other plausible effects on our social, economic and political life. Five percent car-owning voters will give their smiling YES votes to the government that bans rickshaws completely while there will surely be a 95% NO vote. Thousands of additional cars will be imported to fill in the vacuum, so that the traffic which now, just barely crawls, will eventually come to a standstill, leaving Dhakabashis living like zombies in their pigeon-holes. Law and order situation? well, that is for the government to handle, if they can.

Sikander Ahmed

Niketon, Gulshan-1, Dhaka

Sad truth

Bangladesh is one of the poorest and most densely populated countries with a large population suffering from innumerable problems.

But it is a matter of great regret that very few attempts are being made to solve those problems.

Dipankar Bar

Trunk Road

Feni

NGO sector

The present government has much success and has taken many initiatives in different areas but the NGO sector remains unchanged. The government should take some pragmatic steps to reorganise the sector as it has a huge contribution to the development of the country.

S M Nazer Hossain

Central EC Member

Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB)

Uttar Adabor, Dhaka

Whysuicide?

Committing suicide is a malady which has suddenly started to grip the young generation of our country. Every day, unfolding the morning newspaper, I am greatly dismayed and astonished to find reports on youths who have chosen the route to death by themselves.

Just a few days back, a schoolgirl committed suicide because her parents were too busy to take her to the Baishakhi Mela. Last Saturday, an HSC student committed suicide because she feared that she hadn't written all the answers properly. Even a young man took his own life after being refused. And girls are committing suicide after facing harassment. But my question is, what is the point of such self destruction?

I myself am an HSC examinee this year, so I know I am young, but I have my own philosophy about life. My life is a sacred gift presented to me by The Almighty Allah and I have absolutely no right to waste it. All major religions support this view.

I earnestly urge the guardians to be more tolerant. The young generation should also respect their elders and keep themselves away from any unsocial affairs and crimes. If anyone wants to protest against something, he has got thousands of ways to do so. Committing suicide is not a symbol of protest, it is the sign of ultimate cowardice and despondency.

Shahriar Kabir

HSC examinee 2010, Notre

Dame College

Eskaton Garden Govt. Officers' Quarters Dhaka

Cheerleaders

We are having some wonderful T20 cricket named NCL for the first time. But something caught my eyes two days ago, when I saw a picture in the sports page of The Daily Star. It was a snapshot of cheerleaders dancing outside the boundary rope. I don't understand why this is necessary. Already, we are facing lots of problems in the form of teasing and violence on women. Then why should we imitate someone else's practice which only degrades womenfolk? Can't we all stand against these and think something positive?

Honorable BCB President, can you please stop this?

Rubaiyat

A cricket lover

Holy message

It is very distressing to hear that the politicians are frequently using indecent words, even also in Parliament, towards their rivals. They should always keep in mind the Holy Messages of our dearest Nabi and Rasul Hazrat Muhammad (Pbuh).

Our dearest Rasul (Pbuh) said, "One should not criticise the dead. Because they get the results of their own deeds soon after their death." **Habibur Rashid Ismail**
Jamea Rahmania Madrasa Chittagong

Upazila issue

The new move by the government has opened up new avenues for controversy in the management of the upazila parishad. The chairman remains as chief executive whereas the UNO becomes principal executive-- what is the difference? This amendment will come as a bill in the next session or promulgated by ordinance not clear yet. There is no reason to believe that the government has come out of their hidden position to maintain the political string in the upazila parishad.

Fortunately, I have a little experience to work in the local government system including the upazila system when introduced in the 80's. The problem of power sharing between the chairman and the UNO was there. However, after a couple years of operation the UNO realized that the chairman is the head of the institution for policy making and he or she is there to execute. As soon as they realized this reality, they started to work under the overall control of the chairman empowered by the upazila parishad.

The problem, I could understand, was due to bureaucratic egoism and superiority complex and became a problem of adjustment and human relation. This can easily be overcome by regular training of the

bureaucrats and empowerment of the elected chairman by clear government instruction and training of the elected chairman to know how to exercise their inherent power as elected persons where the public servants are subservient to them. Any kind of politicking will just kill the local self government system as a whole, and will bring in more undesirable central control in the system.

The issue of financial control and approving authority needs a fresh look. There is no reason to believe that bureaucrats are more honest than the elected representatives!

Quadir

California, USA

General's comments

After the infamous massacre of brilliant senior and mid ranking army officers along with some of their family members and a few innocent civilians on 25-26th February 2009 by the BDR Jawans inside BDR Headquarters at Pilkhana, the whole nation was stunned and dumb-founded. Every body looked for clue and an answer to the unprecedented tragedy.

Some time back, I got puzzled and dismayed, when in one of the talk shows that I was fortunate to watch, I heard a Major General replying to a question by the presenter very

calmly remark "Had the army intervened and counterattacked the rebels to put down the rebellion, the consequences would have been disastrous". He repeated his saying. He also expressed his complacency that the army was not mobilised. Surely, the retired General with all his experience and training must have underestimated the strength of our armed forces to put down a few rebels inside an encircled area or this might have been his wishful conclusion of the harrowing incident. But what surprises us is how could he surmise in such a manner over an incident involving an ill equipped paramilitary force facing a regular mighty army?

Our thoughts and prayers are with the dead and the living victims.

Khalid

London, UK

Physical presence

A few days back, I took my wife to a hospital in Gulshan for medical treatment. While entering the main entrance I saw lots of marks on the doors from the dirty, greasy & sweating hands. Inside I observed the furniture, partitions & floors all neat, tidy & clean. Next I asked the passing-by cleaner in uniform whether they had glass cleaning liquid & a piece of cloth so that the entrance doors could be

cleaned.

After an hour, while I was going out of the hospital with my wife I found all the front side swing doors were clean & glittering!

Similarly, if we want to make our country attractive, tidy & developed then the politicians, bureaucrats, contractors & their fellow workers as various teams should remain absolutely functional with physical presence with a sharp mind, keen observation, proper direction & quicker implementation for power generation, water & gas supply, population & traffic control & arresting price hikes of the essential commodities.

Golam Ashraf

Gulshan, Dhaka

Controversial judges

With all due respect to the policies adopted by the government and their success and failure I would like to draw your kind attention to the recent controversy with regard to the two controversial judges' appointment. Seventeen judges, including those two judges, were appointed by the President of Bangladesh. Out of them 15 were sworn in by the Honourable Chief Justice of Bangladesh. Due to the constant and persistent pressure from the pro BNP lawyers the Chief Justice refrained from administering the oaths of those two controversial judges. Though it was initiated by those lawyers but it was the demand of the most of the general people of Bangladesh who have facilitated the Bangladesh Awami League to achieve absolute majority in the last general election. At least, the people of Bangladesh, especially those who are related to the law profession, heaved a sigh of relief that the government was relieved by the Chief Justice of Bangladesh of the stigma of the worst form of nepotism and favouritism.

As a well-wisher of the government it can be suggested that such a decision should not be taken by the government to appoint those controversial judges which puts the government itself into a big question mark on their credibility and acceptance by the general people.

The government should remember one old proverb "A stitch in time saves nine". Otherwise, it would be too late to rectify. **Barrister Mohammad Mazibur Rahman**
Former Senior Assistant Judge Bangladesh Judiciary London, UK

Politics of litigation

The 20 April DS editorial "Politics of litigation" is a message for both the ruling and opposition leaders. Begum Khaleda's threat to put the present ruling party men into a volley of litigations after her return to power again is the outburst of her "scare" of

trial of cantonment house notice case, money laundering cases against her two sons and also the parliament office misappropriation cases against some senior leaders. There are many cases of corruption against BNP leaders. All these cases, in fact, were filed during the caretaker administration and not by the present ruling party after its return to power.

The present government is only trying to continue the trial process for a judicial conclusion. We support this part and also believe that all the cases prosecuted by CTG including the ones made against the AL leaders should continue in the usual manner.

If we are correct, the present government has not newly prosecuted anyone, it has only initiated re-investigation of some notorious cases like 10-Truck Arms Haul Case, 21st August bomb attack in the AL meeting, attempted covering up of Kibria murder case, and few others wherein the new findings which are coming out in the presses have alarmed the people. They have learned how people sitting in the high position to defend the country's security, compromised the security and engaged themselves in breaking the security of the state. Had this government not initiated re-investigation the truth would not have been open to the people.

The DS has advised both the parties to empower the ACC, at the same time it should have advised the present government to boldly pursue the trial of cases like the above.

If this government succeeds in resolving the cases and the culprits are punished under the country's law, Begum Khaleda Zia's hands would also be strengthened not only to keep her adversaries in the corridors of courts, but also she will be able to put them in the cage after her return to power again. She is learning to make new cases but she is not learning to protect the law which would help her more in the future. Both the parties should learn to honour the country's law.

Shafiqul Islam, NY

Green tax

This is a very interesting, acceptable and a constructive way of creating awareness and responsibility for preventing environment pollution. This 'Green Tax' was proposed at the pre-budget discussions at the CPD. It was published in your 'Star Business' on 18 April.

This will effectively replace the need for persuasion and directives which are usually ignored by us Bangladeshis!

It is important that necessary laws are framed, and passed in parliament so that it becomes a programme for regular compliance and assessment like any other tax. Before this law goes into effect, the modalities for evaluating the environment cleaning measures adopted by industry and commercial operations have to be designed on a just and fair basis.

For industrial implementation, various rules and regulations in the Factory Acts can be transposed, especially regarding cleanliness of workplace and premises, hygiene, washing and sanitary facilities for the workpeople and noise pollution as basis for periodic monitoring, which should at least be at half-yearly intervals to be effective!

It will be appreciated if the government and the concerned ministry and divisions are advised to follow up on this matter with all due dispatch.

It will not be opposed by any quarter, for the measure has been suggested by the owners of facilities where the proposed green tax can be levied. **Engr. S.A. Mansoor**
Dhaka

Health tips

Professor Zahidul Haque deserves special thanks for his informative letter dated April 16, 2010 on 'saturated fats'. In this connection, I may mention that a very interesting article on how to



Child abuse

The term "child abuse" refers to the violence, mistreatment or neglect that a child or adolescent may experience while in the care of someone they either trust or depend on, such as a parent, sibling, other relative, caregiver or guardian. Abuse may take place anywhere and may occur, for example, within the child's home or that of someone known to the child. There are many different forms of abuse and a child may be subjected to more than one form: physical abuse may consist of just one incident or it may happen repeatedly. It involves deliberately using force against a child in such a way that the child is either injured or is at risk of being injured. Physical abuse includes beating, hitting, shaking, pushing, choking, biting, burning, kicking or assaulting a child with a weapon. It also includes holding a child under water, or any other dangerous or harmful use of force or restraint. Sexual abuse and exploitation involves using a child for sexual purposes. Neglect is often chronic, and it usually involves repeated incidents. It involves failing to provide what a child needs for his or her physical, psychological or emotional development and well-being. For example, neglect includes failing to provide a child with food, clothing, shelter, cleanliness, medical care or protection from harm. Emotional neglect includes failing to provide a child with love, safety, and a sense of worth. Emotional abuse involves harming a child's sense of self. It includes acts (or omissions) that result in, or place a child at risk of, serious behavioural, cognitive, emotional or mental health problems. For example, emotional abuse may include verbal threats, social isolation, intimidation, exploitation, or routinely making unreasonable demands. It also includes terrorizing a child, or exposing them to family violence. An abuser may use a number of different tactics to gain access to a child, exert power and control over them, and prevent them from telling anyone about the abuse or seeking support. A child who is being abused is usually in a position of dependence on the person who is abusing them. Abuse is a misuse of power and a violation of trust.

Many surveys have shown that a good number of school children suffer from stomach aches, chronic headaches including migraines, recurring chest, arm, and leg pains. Of these, only a few have medical significance. Parental pressure is the main cause of these pains. Parents should stop over exploiting their children in the name of development. They should decide whether they want an 'achiever' or a physically and mentally healthy child.

Gopal Sengupta

Canada

remain physically fit and mentally active even during old age appeared in the Time Magazine (U.S. Edition) dated February 22, 2010 which I have downloaded from the Internet. This article gives useful health tips based on the latest research findings. For the information of your esteemed readers, I am furnishing below the pertinent points covered in the write-up.

To maintain good health, the following factors must be addressed: 1. Calorie restriction. 2. Resveratrol (grapes, peanuts). 3. Omega 3 fatty acids (fish oil, flaxseed, walnuts, supplements). 4. Rigorous physical activity (very important). 5. 15 minutes of sunlight or 1000 I.U. Vitamin D daily. 6. 1000 mg. calcium (legumes, dairy products, supplements daily). 7. 500 mg. magnesium daily. 8. Phytochemicals and micronutrients (whole foods). 9. Sleep (7-8 hours daily). 10. Purposeful life (family, work, community). 11. Mental exercises. 12. Fibre (fruits and vegetables). 13. Soya foods. 14. Staying lean. 15. Meditation (yoga, prayer) 16. Green tea (4 cups daily). 17. No smoking. 18. Extrovert and easy going. 19. Anti-oxidants (sweet potatoes, broccoli, tomatoes). 20. Olive oil and Multi-vitamins.

Anyone interested in going through the original article for more details is welcome to contact me at: shamimjammed@gmail.com and I shall be glad to send him/her a copy of the same together with references to

Even our Honourable Prime Minister has warned of sabotage. I would like to request the govt to post special army units to look at this until August/September. This would involve maintaining load-shedding schedule and attending power generation areas so that there is no sabotage. It may be mentioned here that while I was writing this letter, there was yet another "load-shedding", so that I had to wait for the power to return for finishing it. When the power goes off, we have no lights, no TV (so we cannot get any news), no Internet, no computer!! **Ranjan Chowdhury**
Distillery Road, Dhaka

Power failures

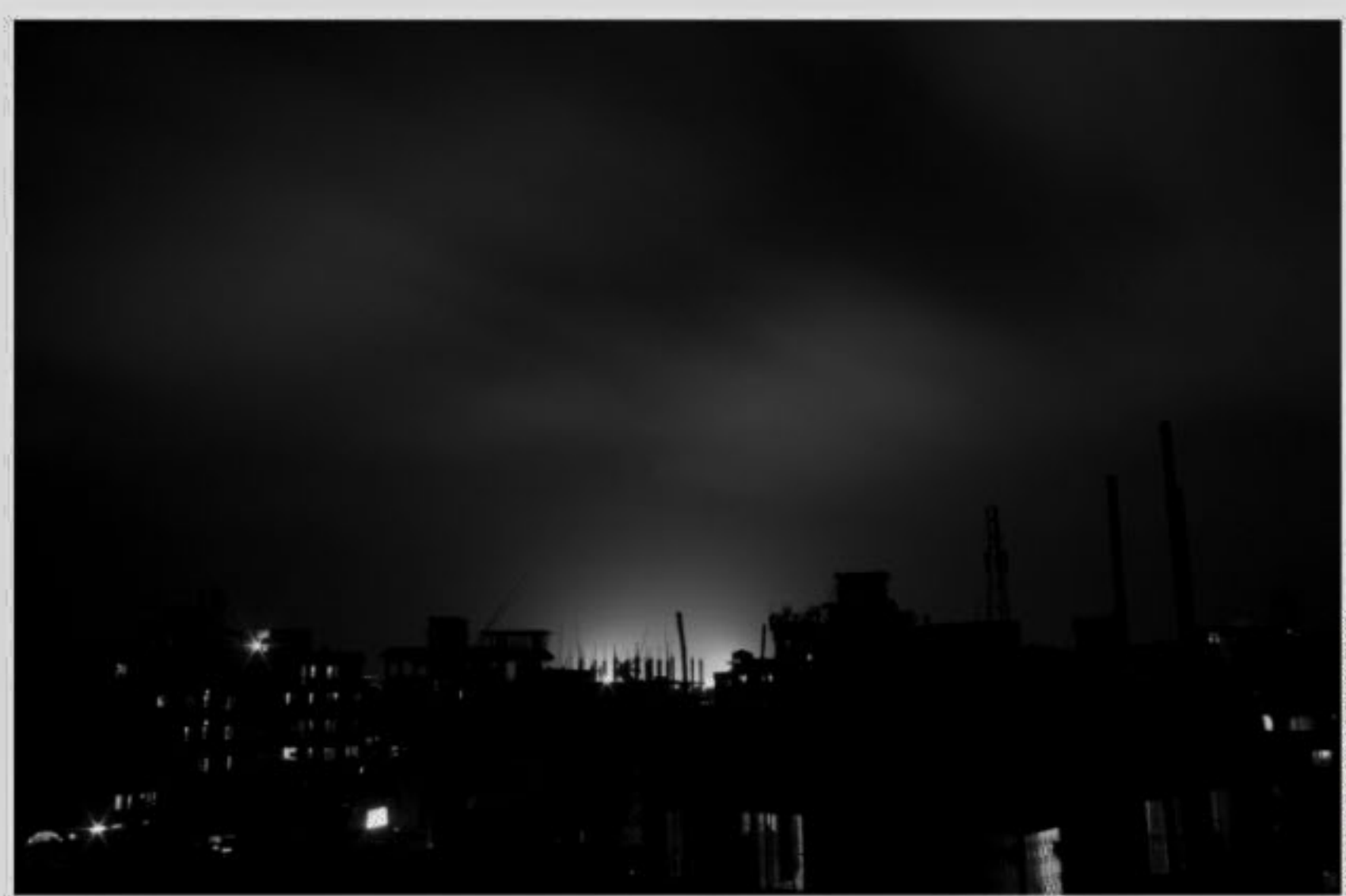
We are quite frustrated about the future of electricity! Production cannot keep pace with demand. Where's the gap? The number of consumers is increasing rapidly and so is the consumption rate! Systems loss, and pilferage are there also.

The government is not doing anything. They know about the terrible situation but they are not at all concerned. Still, the government officials play tennis at night, meetings are held in AC rooms, where general people don't get electricity during public exams. We the general people are also

responsible for such a situation as we are not that much careful in using electricity.

We are suffering but still we are not rectifying ourselves! We can prevent misuse of electricity. Most of the time we are leaving the room without turning off the lights, fans, PC, AC etc.

We need a behavioural change in every step. **Mehruba Islam**
MS student Department of Geography and Environment University of Dhaka



WAHID UDDIN / DRINKNEWS