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Our flora and fauna



The environment of Bangladesh includes flora and fauna and their natural habitats. The greater part of the human inhabitants lives in or around big cities and this has helped to limit deforestation slightly. Nevertheless, the growth rate continues to amplify at an alarming rate and this has created huge demands on the environment and leads to destruction of several natural habitats. Despite the fact that quite a lot of areas are sheltered under law, a great segment of Bangladeshi wildlife is in jeopardy by this expansion.

Bangladesh is home to approximately 22 species of amphibian, 17 species of marine reptiles, 109 species

of reptile, 388 species of birds, 110 species of mammals and 3 species of marine mammals.

Until now, countless creatures have moved out fully from the country and an added 201 species are endangered. Distinguished species that have vanished from Bangladesh are the one-horned rhinoceros, the two-horned rhinoceros, the hog deer and swamp deer, wolf, marsh crocodile and wild buffalo. In a nutshell, such a huge loss affects the atmosphere and brings about ecological imbalances.

Shohag Mostafij

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Thailand scene

I moved to Bangkok a couple of weeks ago when the pro-Thaksin Red Shirts and the current Thai government seemed to be on the brink of reaching accord. In fact, I walked around amongst the protesters in their make-shift campsite in the centre of Bangkok's financial and shopping districts near the national stadium. The scene was tame; some of the tents had children playing computer games, women lounging around and men folk chatting amongst themselves. They had their own medical check-up stations, water supplies and a myriad of food stalls.

The whole place had loudspeakers blaring live speakers from the centre stage only a few blocks away. The exit and entry points were barricaded with stack of tires, bamboo sticks, barbed wires and red cloths.

As the talks fell through, sniper attacks, home made bottle bombs and real bullets replaced the otherwise peaceful scene I had seen only a few days earlier. I watched convoys of army trucks drive by on the expressway leading to the site from the old Don Mueang Airport past my hotel which is located about 10 miles east of the epicentre. Last weekend, there was smoke billowing all day long from behind the skyscraper lined centre of Bangkok. The sky train and the underground stations closest to my location were closed.

There are several sources of information feeding the foreigners - or 'farangs' as we are known here: in addition to regular e-mail updates from our respective embassies, there are blogs as well as the foreign journalists. The BBC has come out and declared the former PM, Thaksin Sinawatra to be the "corrupt" person working the protests from behind the scene. Rumour has it that some of the Red Shirts field leaders themselves have admitted being funded by him.

For now life goes on as normal: Thais are indifferent and patient. We, the 'farangs' are somewhat bemused and a little anxious. I expect we will get used to this also. With the financial crisis in Greece, the ashes from Iceland, the oil spillage in the Gulf of Mexico looming in the background, Bangkok does not seem like a bad place at all to call my new home. Things will get fixed the time honoured Thai way - hopefully sooner than later!

Shabbir A Bashar, PhD
Bangkok, Thailand

MPs

Politicians in our country expect everyone to act as per the law and ethics but think these do not apply to them. How can the nation tolerate MPs when they waste precious working hours by raising petty issues? There is urgent need to uphold the dignity and ethics of public life. Just as we have provisions for punishing

erring employees, necessary rules should be framed to enable presiding officers to summarily dismiss members who misbehave and disturb the House. People should also have the right to recall their representative if they feel that he disturbs the functioning of the House unnecessarily. When workers strike work, the principle of "no work, no pay" is enforced. Will the Jatiya Sangsad embrace that policy and cut off the perks and other benefits extended to the MPs for their walkouts and abstentions from the House?

Gopal Sengupta
Canada

A martyr

The date was 19 May 2009. A traffic sergeant named Abdul Baset Talukder sacrificed his life while rendering his valuable service.

Not only Baset himself but his family is also great. His elder brother too belonged to the same profession and lost his life in the road. What is more important is that the death of his elder brother did not discourage Baset, rather motivated him, to accept this royal profession. His death made his wife widow and a family guideless.

Baset is no longer with us. But his dream is with us. What should we do for this man? If we forget this man, then our conscience will not forgive us. Giving award is not enough for this man. What is more important is that we need to march forward to actualise his dream.

The drivers who do not obey traffic rules, the helpers who force a passenger to land down from the running bus in the middle of the road, and the people who distribute fake licenses are all our social enemies. They are now beyond our tolerance.

Baset is not my brother or my friend. Then why should I recollect the man? In fact, his sacrifice teaches us a lesson. We can not allow his dream to parish away. The life of Baset can not go in vain. The death of Baset's elder brother motivated him to fight. In the same way, the death of Baset has motivated thousands to prepare for the battle. I promise to fight against road accidents till the last breath of my life.

Lastly, my salute to Abdul Baset Talukder, his noble profession and his family.

Pradip Das

Lecturer

BHPI, CRP

Congratulations!

I congratulate Rooshnara Ali for winning the Bethnal Green and Bow constituency seat for Labour. Her Muslim and Bengali background are irrelevant in this context as all the rival major contestants that she beat in this election were all Bengali Muslims. She won by 21784 votes against Mr Masroor of Liberal Democrat who got 10210 votes. The other major contestants were Mr A Miah of Respect who got 8532 votes and Mr Z Khan of

Eve teasing

Eve teasing is a crime and it has attacked us like an octopus. In the last couple of months, a number of girls have sacrificed their lives due to intolerable teasing and they made us understand how helpless we are. Don't we feel that the situation is getting worse? Really, we have nothing to do about it. But I think, we have something to do. I do believe if we stand together, we can stop this.

I have some ideas to reduce eve teasing and I'd like to share my ideas with all of you. If we can implement it from our respective positions, obviously we can uproot eve teasing.

Parents should make their sons understand that eve teasing is a social crime. When a teacher teaches his/her student he or she can teach the student about morality along with academic studies. The teacher can also encourage students to be decent and polite.

When a girl kills herself, the law enforcers should immediately arrest the stalkers.

In this area the electronic media can play an important role. I think they should come forward to generate public opinion.

Sabbir Hossain

Tangail

Government's 'conspiracy theories'

The Awami League is immersed in conspiracy theory, whenever anything goes wrong they smell conspiracy in it. When in educational institutions untoward incidents happen, the Awami League declares that activists of the BNP have infiltrated the BCL and they are responsible for it. We have become tired of this sort of irresponsible remarks from the government.

Recently, Awami League leader Mr. Hanif warned the BNP against deliberately creating chaos at a Dhaka rally on May 19, 2010 and blaming the government for it.

Obviously, the BNP wanted their grand rally to be successful, and the idea of deliberately ruining it for the sole purpose of blaming the government is laughable.

Addressing the BNP leaders, the AL general secretary said, "Do not attempt to hatch a conspiracy." Do not create chaos yourselves and later blame the government. But Hanif's warning speaks volumes, people are no fools, they could see through it.

Nur Jahan

Chittagong

Licence to drink!

The whole exercise of issuing 'Liquor Permit', by the Excise Department, is structured on lies, fraud and deceit! It seems that we officially issue the licences to prospective social and 'addicted' drinkers; largely Muslims, usually of the so-called 'high society' who indulge in this illegal vice to drink intoxicating liquor which is disallowed and prohibited in Islam! In a lighter

vein, these licences can be compared to the fictitious James Bond 007's, "licence to kill" issued by the MI5, of course it was un-written!

The application form for the issue of this so-called 'Liquor Permit', known as P.R.1 issued by the Department of Excise, needs a 'medical certificate' from a registered medical doctor which as stated in the P.R.1 form: "it should state the name and nature of the 'ailment' from which the patient might be suffering and the recommendation should be absolute minimum quantity of foreign (not local ones!) liquor necessary for the recovery of the patient!" It further states: "If considered necessary, in any case the Granting Authority (Excise Department) may consult the Civil Surgeon before issuing the permit."

Here we have a registered doctor, the government's Excise Department, as well as the Civil Surgeon, getting involved in medical fraud, and false certification! Is this not a criminal activity practiced by a government official? How would lawyers call it, I wonder! Will some medically aware person, or experts in your 'Health Page or Column' throw some light on the matter, as I am not aware of any medical reason for which alcohol needs to be prescribed! It may refer to 'depression' or 'acute morbidity', which however are psychological rather than medical conditions.

If we still want to issue 'Liquor Permits' on the basis of "see no evil, hear no evil and do no evil", then the government should impose a very high tax for the permit, say Tk.10,000 per annum for Muslims, and half the amount for non-Muslims who want to avail of this health cure!

S.A. Mansoor

Dhaka

Crime against humanity

Thanks to the Rtv for showing the video footage of a meeting attended by a cross section of people who strongly believe in the early trial of the war criminals. It is perhaps necessary to immediately form a small follow-up committee to keep watch on the progress of the trial that began on March 26 2010, and to keep the people informed of the progress. This committee should also identify the barriers including the role of the individuals and the political party publicly opposing the trial, on one pretext or the other.

I am also curious to know whether any family members of the opposition groups have lost their lives in the hands of the alleged killers or any of their family members have suffered humiliation, torture in the hands of the alleged criminals. I am constrained to believe that their shameless role in protecting the criminals indicates their safe position during the war of liberation. I am sorry to mention that the government is perhaps in a dilemma to proceed with the trial in full swing. The law minister is so unreadable and is defending his

action not justified by any facts and figure.

Please do not forget that most people who suffered during the war of liberation were poor and rural.

The culprits deserve to be punished, and punished soon.

Quadir

California, USA

Mobile phone

There is no denying that mobile has become an indispensable tool in this age of technology. Mobile has reached a major portion of the populace. But what is a matter of concern is that it has reached some people who should not have access to it. It is a self-destructing tool for the teen-agers who can't rein in its misuse.

So, it is time we restricted the unabated use of mobile phones for the betterment of our future generation.

Md. Enamul Hoque

BUET

What is going on?

Serenity is lost in this world of urbanisation. This planet is heading toward a severe catastrophe, as the climate is changing rapidly. Where are the friends of humans in this planet of machines and vehicles? Aren't we losing them gradually? Where are the trees? They're being cut down, as if the earth never needed them anyway.

We are becoming too mechanical, even to recognise our friends for life. Let's not cut trees. Let's not kill our friends.

Cantara Wali

MBA, DU

To the PM..

Once upon a time I was very proud of being a member of the Chhatra League. I can still recall the day when I became a member of the CL in 1964. I was a student of class 5 in Dacca Collegiate School. I passed the golden days of my life at Dacca College as the cultural secretary of CL during the post liberation period. We had a motto and a vision, instead of tender manipulation and making money.

Last week, I was looking at the newspapers of Dhaka on Internet. Only in a single day I found a number of news items and photographs on BCL terrorists. I did not see any difference between BCL and BCD (Chhatra Dal).

Can you please tell me if there is any reason to be proud of BCL anymore? They are digging their own graves by indulging the BCL. All other successes achieved by this AL regime will just be wiped out by the illegitimate activities of the BCL.

We have heard many shouts (HUNKAR) by toothless ministers. They did not work. The AL leadership should not feel that the people of this country are deaf and dumb and insane. The people will give their verdict next time.

Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, please try to feel the pulse of the unfortunate people of Bangladesh.

We fought for the liberation of the country not to be hostages in the hands of the BCL.

Your Excellency, if you fail this time not only you, but also the whole country and the MUKTI JUDDHER CHETONA will disappear forever!

Mustafa Jamil
Aprobashi Bangalee

Sweden

Ship breaking industry

A strong move is on against the ship breaking industry to remove this market from Bangladesh to other countries. Some NGOs are trying to protect the rights of workers and save the environment from bad effects of ship breaking. We support them. But we can not lose the huge prospect in the name of serving workers and the environment. We have to be more flexible for this industry. More than 250,000 people are engaged in this sector directly or indirectly. Every year the government earns a good income from it. It saves a huge amount of foreign currency by reducing import of steel and raw material. It provides 80% of the iron used by the steel factories.

As a developing country, it's so much lucrative for us. That's why we have to nurture it.

Sala Uddin Ahmad
Immediate Past President
Rotaract Club
Chittagong University

Disowning BCL

The BCL is the oldest student organisation in this sub-continent. It has a long and glorious history that gives this organisation an exclusivity. The BCL emerged in 1948 before the emergence of Bangladesh Awami League. In fact, most of the prominent politicians in the AL had a long involvement with the BCL. Their political school was BCL. It is so painful to hear that they feel shy with the present activities of the BCL. Some of them even said that the government was not responsible for its offensive activities. After the AL's coming to power, the BCL is becoming desperate.

Now everyone is blaming

amount to face these difficulties. To me, it should be in two phases, one is central and another in regional. We know which areas, in general, are in a vulnerable position. So, the districts concerned can be brought under special care. An amount can be allocated for those districts at the beginning of the fiscal year. The local government of those regions, with assistance of local administration, will prepare themselves for probable disaster management. For the construction of protection centres, constructing dams and roads, training up the volunteers, tree plantations etc those funds can be utilized. Moreover, 'hard cash support' will facilitate them to procure pure drinking water, and have emergency food support and medicines within the least possible time.

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SHAFIQ ISLAM / DRINKNEWS

student politics. Some are suggesting dissolution of BCL's activities. It will never be a solution. I am requesting the veteran politicians of the AL to take some stern steps for sustaining BCL's glorious history. Otherwise, everything will go in vain.

Md. Taherul Islam

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Government's performance

The present govt got a huge mandate in the last general election on the theme of "Digitalisation". They have been working hard for the last one year. But they failed in the power sector, that is the prerequisite of digitalisation.

However, they should not shut down television channels on political grounds.

Rahad Jannatul Islam
One-mail

Stalking and sexual harassment

The increase in stalking and sexual harassment in our society is a threat to education and empowerment of women. The school-going girls in the rural areas are the worst victims of these heinous activities in our male-dominated society which can hardly be tolerated. Thousands of brilliant girls, being compelled, leave schools and colleges in the fear of stalking criminals who are used to teasing them on their way to school and college. Needless to mention, these types of news reports remain unpublished in the mass media except a few. These make poor parents anxious about their daughters. Sometimes they lose mental balance and even commit suicide. Who are responsible for their demise? Can we ignore our duty and responsibility? I strongly believe that lack of moral lesson and impact of satellite channels are mainly responsible for this. Moreover, teenage boys guided by animalism, the darkest side of human being, ignore the norms and other social values of society.

Mass awareness is mandatory to ensure the security as well as education of the girls. The role of the family is important as it is the ideal institution to teach the members about morality and the principles of religion. If we do not stop the stalkers, the Dream of Rokeya Sakawat will end in smoke.

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Education for all



Education is always important for every nation in this world for development and peace; education enables a human-being to be a worthy citizen. Also, education makes a person more 'aware'.

Education is not always the textbook knowledge or the teacher's lecture; it's also the spiritual knowledge.

After our country's liberation,

we have fought to improve our literacy rate and to ensure 'education for all', but the situation is still not satisfactory. With this literacy rate, it's always difficult to move forward.

Let's come forward to make a literate Bangladesh!
Ahnaaf Ahmad
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