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Polluted city



LITON RAHMAN / DORIANEWS

Overcrowded Dhaka is already considered the world's most polluted city. Yet its environment is being polluted further unabatedly. The poor, the lower middle class and our innocent children are particularly affected by pollution. They are more exposed as they work & travel for long hours. Their poor nutrition makes them less resistant to diseases and they have limited access to healthcare. According to some estimates, 20,000 citizens are facing premature death every year due to high pollution. In my view to reduce environmental pollution, the government should take following pollution control measures.

- 1) At least four measuring stations should be set up within the city to measure pollution level every day.
- 2) Existing environment protection laws should be fully enforced.
- 3) A Dhaka pollution control board should be established. The Board is to undertake an inventory & forecast key sources of pollutants, set emission reduction goal, plan monitoring & quantify actions to reduce these pollutants.
- 4) Steps should be taken to reduce transport & fuel related pollution caused by faulty engines and old vehicles.
- 5) All brickfields in and around the city should be converted to gas-fired ones.
- 6) Roadside tree plantation programmes & social forestry should be strengthened.

Md. Nazmus Sakib
Student, Dept. of Geography & Environmental Studies
University of Chittagong

Campus politics

Our country has a glorious history of student politics. From the language movement to liberation war, students took part in all progressive movements. But what is happening now?

The government has to rein in its unruly young supporters.

Rahad Jannatul Islam
JNU

Extra-judicial killing

The news published in DS on 5 July about the extra-judicial killing of three businessmen by law enforcers is mind-boggling. Those, who are deployed to show the right path and force people to abide by law and order, are the offenders in those cases.

The cases should not go unnoticed.

Engr. M. Helal Uddin
Eastern Refinery Limited
North Potenga, Chittagong

Reducing traffic jam

It is true that traffic jam is one of the most burning issues in our country, especially in Dhaka city. People think there are several causes behind this. What are the main causes? Some are blaming the private cars, and others are blaming the rickshaws. They think if one of the transports, especially rickshaw, is banned, then traffic jam will be reduced.

Accordingly, plying of rickshaws has been banned at many connecting points of Uttara. Of such connecting roads, one is Alaul Avenue or House Building Road and another is Kazi Jashimuddin Road. A baton wielding police officer stands on the road and stops all the rickshaws. May I kindly ask, is Dhaka slowly becoming a city for car owners only? Because it's allowed on all roads.

This action has caused problem to old people, school going kids, patients and

women.

The uncontrolled growth of rickshaws has resulted in traffic jam, because the government has totally failed to tackle the growth in time with an effective plan to encounter it.

In this connection, an example can be cited- Mrs. Rumana Parvin, a resident of Jurain in Jatra Bari, works in a real estate company at Uttara. She used to commute by bus and then rickshaw to reach her destination. It's quite difficult for her to come to the office across the long distance. It's horrible now when she reaches Uttara, she doesn't get any rickshaw.

What will happen to the scores of people like Mrs. Rumana Parvin or others who have no transport of their own?

The authorities should address the issue in right earnest.

Sadia Mahboob
Uttara, Dhaka

Nurturing the meritorious

The Rotary Club of Dhaka Central has taken up a scheme, to sponsor the meritorious students (SSC, GPA-5), who are extremely poor (parents are daily wage earners, hard core poor). The failure of the GPA-5 students to pursue further studies is a great national wastage. There are investments and investments (power, generational infrastructure development, stimulus package). But the finest of them all is the investment on education. Right investment, at the right time and the right place, can engineer our growth.

Shahbuddin Mahtab
On e-mail

Marriage age

Undoubtedly, the number one problem of Bangladesh is the population explosion. The country has to face various problems due to the population boom. Lowering the minimum age for getting married can be an effective measure in order to control

the present population increment. Virtually, all fertility occurs within the wedlock in our country. Fertility rate, however, is closely related to marriage age. As a result, the upward and downward change in marriage age is related to productive behaviour.

Bangladesh is in the lowest rung among the South Asian countries in fixing the minimum marriage age. In 1984, through a government order, the minimum age was fixed at 18 years and 21 years for females and males respectively. A long time has gone by. In the mean time, health, education in Bangladesh have improved and poverty has been reduced to some extent but no change in the minimum marriage age has been made.

There are some instances of positive changes brought about by upward adjustment of marriage age. China passed laws fixing the minimum marriage age, first at 18 years for women and 20 years for men in 1950, then at 20 for women and 22 for men. Between 1972 and 1985 China's average fertility rate dropped from 5.7 to 2.1. The World Bank estimated that if Bangladesh adopts the Sri Lankan marriage age, 25 years, families will have fewer children.

If the government increases the present minimum marriage age to 20 and 23 years respectively for women and men and implements the law, some positive changes will take place.

Yeahia Ali Mamun
Honours student
Dept. of Soil, Water and Environment
University of Dhaka

More books needed

I am a regular visitor to the Public Library at Shahbag in Dhaka. I have completed studying books on literature, history and journalism. I do not always get the books that I want to read.

The Public Library should have more books.
Sumon Corraya
Monipuripara, Dhaka

Load shedding

I am an inhabitant of Jurain area. Recently, the amount of load shedding in this area has reached the peak. Electricity remains operative for twelve hours and in the rest twelve hours we experience load shedding. Even during night-time load shedding occurs several times and the sufferings of the people know no bounds. Children and old people suffer unbearably. The authorities seem indifferent to the issue.

I would like to draw the attention of the authorities concerned to our plight.

Shahadat
Jurain, Dhaka

Children and corporal punishment

In a candid and forthright article written by Sir Frank Peters in an English-language newspaper about corporal punishment in our schools, he asks why we, loving parents, are permitting teachers to beat our children, the same ones we claim to love more than ourselves.

He asks all the lawmakers why they have not come forward to abolish it.

He points out it serves no good purpose to the individual or to society, but causes tremendous damage to the child's mental (and sometimes physical) state and scars them for life.

Ever since reading the story my wife, neighbours, and I have been discussing this and asking ourselves exactly the same question.

We think we are a law-abiding peaceful nation, but given the first opportunity we burn cars, motorcycles, public and private property in the streets for no logical reason. We kill and maim bag snatchers, yet there are 1001 worst crimes. We damage the machinery in our garments factories and set fire to the premises, the same factories that put food on our tables year-in, year-out and deprive

ourselves of our livelihoods. Our university students cause horrendous and deplorable injuries to each other in the name of democracy. What role has corporal punishment played in our learning to be violent and acting disgraceful for the entire world to see, as we often do?

Sir Frank said corporal punishment has no place in modern society. "It only teaches violence and ingrains despise and hatred".

You only have to look at the deplorable behaviour of our university students and the shameful bad example they are setting for young children, to know he is right. The sooner this government takes time off from renaming airports and concentrates on what really matters our children's welfare the better.

Md. Abdol B. Latif
Khulna

The human factor

Publicising a new project is not enough. The bugs are in the implementation details; and in the unwanted and negative human elements prevailing and interfering at about all the vertical and horizontal levels, in the LDCs. This is mainly due to the immature political culture prevailing at the governance levels; with short-term subjective outlook.

I recall that while I was on active service decades ago in Dhaka, as a senior engineer, I used to place one of our engineers on duty at the Secretariat, to assist the secretariat officers in quick upward movement of the files. He explained the technical implications to the section officer concerned.

This brings us to the point of still using pen-pushing methods in our Secretariat - a legacy of the British Raj period (remember the Writers' building in old colonial Calcutta?).

Unless Dhaka is decentralised, the mega city is sure to die out. The farmers in the rural areas are keeping us alive, but they have no social status, due to marginal living conditions. The dynasty rules have glaring weaknesses; but it continues today, even after decades.

The politicians have to wake up!
AMawaz, Dhaka

BNP and Tarique

This is a golden opportunity for Mr Tarique Rahman, the senior vice president of the BNP, to prove himself as a clean man and come out of the general feelings about him (corruption). As claimed by the BNP, the case of money laundering against Mr Tarique is politically motivated to tarnish his image and is a plot to restrict him from doing politics, because he has now the most talented leadership capability and has great views to lead the country and claimed him as a RISING SUN OF THE EAST.

What I believe is that the govt has handed a golden opportunity to Mr Tarique and the golden ball is now in his court and it is up to him now to net it either by dribbling or by a direct shot. This opportunity must not be spoiled. Mr Tarique must now has a chance to go to court and prove himself clean and once he gets the clearance notice from the court the people of Bangladesh will

Fuzzy democracy

We are the people living in a democratic state. The essence of democracy is that the sovereign power of the state is in the hands of the people and the people are the source of the state power. In a democratic state, political parties have the right to adopt the peaceful measures like demonstration, procession, human chain, hunger strike etc to press home their respective demands. It may be the party in power or the opposition. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) made a human chain on July 7 to put pressure on the government for releasing their party leaders and activists who were detained during the hartal day. But our govt. used the police force with the collaboration of party activists to deal

with the protests. It is a shame for democracy. We the general people do not support the destructive hartal culture, nor do we expect undemocratic activities from the political parties.

The present govt. has a vision to establish a digital Bangladesh by the year of 2021. It is not possible by brushing aside the practical exercise of democracy inside the party as well as countrywide. So, the political parties, especially the party in power, should be more temperate and show due respect to democracy. Otherwise, the dream of a digital Bangladesh will remain a dream only.

Md. Nazrul Islam
Dept of Political Science, DU



PHOTO: STAR

acknowledge him as clean man and will come to the conclusion that the propaganda against Mr Tarique was spread from the time of the last caretaker govt is totally false, fabricated and motivated and was made to deprive the countrymen of the honest and mature leadership of Mr Tarique. On the other hand, I will request BNP high ups and strongly suggest not to stick to the point that the govt has any ill motives behind it but just face it boldly and prove in the court that Mr Tarique is clean by going through legal procedures.

This is not only the last and golden opportunity but a blessing in disguise.
Dr Shameem
New DOHS Mohakhali
Dhaka

An appeal to PM

Dear Hon' able Prime Minister, as a voter, and as a citizen of the country, I would like to place an appeal to you for taking an action against those so called students involved in crimes. To save the nation, such hooliganism has to be stopped. I will urge you to see the photographs and news items in the national dailies on misdeeds of the so-called students. I am deeply shocked to see these series of horrific activities.

I have a serious question to the students, parents, and teachers and to the government: what is the job of the student and what are they doing? Is the educational institution a place of study and future building or a business place to earn money? Obviously NOT. Then, who is responsible for it? I think that the government has to play a role to control the unruly students. And students, parents, teachers, media and law enforcement agencies have to come forward to assist the government to curb all such criminal activities.
S. M. Masudul Islam
Rajbari

Eve teasing

Everyone is familiar with the term. It means to disturb girls with objectionable remarks and gestures. It actually means gestures and using slang language in presence of the teenage girls. This amoral activity is on the increase in our country. Especially, some hooligans and demoralised and addicted boys are involved in eve teasing. They do not have any moral feeling and family learning. They are regarded as weeds in society. Their ill and irritating behaviour causes serious mental agony to girls. Many girls committed suicide.

It cannot be accepted in a civilised society. It is really a violation of human rights. The present government has given importance to this issue and

also decided to pass an act to arrest and punish the eve teasers. All organisations and people should beware of it.
Habibur Rashid Ismail
Chittagong

Hartal

Of course, in most of the cases hartal is called by the opposition party of the country and in this case Bangladesh is not an exception. On 27 June, the hartal called by the BNP, the main opposition party, was observed across the country with many processions on the streets. But the role of the law enforcers during the time of hartal was really questionable as they were tough on the people. They also tortured citizens entering into their houses in the name of maintaining law and order. As a result, it is claimed by some people that the govt was using the administration, whereas the role of the administration should be impartial.

We expect that this situation will change for the better in future.
Eng. Md. Meheboob Haque
BUET

Trial of war criminals

A regular comment one would hear and see on the electronic media from some individuals when they are referring to the trial of the war criminals. Exactly the same expression was heard when the trial of the killers of Sheikh Mujib, the founder president, was going on. The apprehension was and is the same, can we find evidence to proceed or why not forget and forgive the same? The inner feeling of these people is not different from a few political parties which are openly working against the trial.

The bottom line is, the government might be looking for an scapegoat and the alleged killers are getting time to bring the situation under their control; there is a proverb in Bangladesh that "Money can make a wooden doll speak". So, be careful!
Faqrul Quadir
California, USA

Deprived people

Since colonial times, Bangladeshis are known to be a deprived people. Yes Bangladeshis are a deprived people there can be no denying it. Bangladesh got its independence back in 1971, it is almost 40 years since then and yet Bangladeshis are being deprived.

To maintain the standard of life in Bangladesh, that one maintains here in Houston would cost him at least the double the amount i.e. US\$1500 X 2 = 3000. Readers please do not be alarmed, it is a truth and those who know it

shall admit the fact. What is the per capita income in Bangladesh? Probably between 600 - 700 US Dollars and what is the per capita income in USA about 40,000 US Dollars and yet the average Americans make it with half the amount as compared to Bangladesh.

The price of daily essentials is almost half in America. On top of all this there is a return policy between 30 days to 90 days depending on the business policy of the stores except for the 99 cents stores. Can you imagine, one can afford to buy a lot of things for a dollar only. How many things would one be able to purchase for US \$ 1 or equivalent taka in Bangladesh except for from the street vendors. The 99 cents store is in no way less posh than shopping malls in Dhaka.

How long will the Bangladeshis continue to suffer deprivation? It is almost 40 years down the road and people are yet to get the benefits of independence. The British left long ago and the Urdu speaking Pakistanis are not there, then why are the Bangladeshis still suffering? Who are exploiting them? Who are reaping the benefits? The nation needs to know and act now without any further delay.
Saleh M Ayub
Houston, Texas, USA

Fighting terrorism

What follow acts of terror are death, injuries, wailing relatives, red alerts, promises from higher officials that something will be done, heated discussions, political blame games, candlelight vigils, and what not. Why are we not prepared to prevent such unfortunate incidents? Names of fundamentalist and extremist organizations, religious and political, are repeated every time there is a terror attack. Citizens cling to the faint hope that something will be done. True, the progress of an investigation cannot be revealed but the result of inquiries can be. Is there no end to the investigations?

After every attack, there is a hue and cry, some political mudslinging, and grant of monetary relief to victims. In a short time, we move on as though nothing happened. There will be no arrests as our system waits for culprits to fall in the net by themselves. Do we accept terrorism as part of our lives? Are we satisfied with some compensation and comforting words? In the ground reality in Bangladesh today, fighting terrorism is not unlike fighting a deadly cancer. It can't be treated just where it's visible - every diseased cell in the body must be destroyed.
Gopal Sengupta
Canada

Thieves within!



A justified, and fairly detailed report criticizing the National Museum management was published on 7 July in a local English daily. In my opinion, the head of the organisation must be taken to task for being responsible for the deplorable state of affairs, when his people can steal gold and silver coins and other valuable artefacts from the premises. It is ironic that the custodians of treasure are treasure hunters and thieves themselves!

It seems that the National Museum is run by a gang of thieves. They must be found out and not only dismissed from service their crimes, but also be criminally punished for this culpable crime against the nation!

It highlights the total incompetence and irresponsibility of the Museum management. Whatever things that this 'criminal and incompetent' management tries to do now, apart from covering up their crimes will be totally irrelevant. If needed the total management should be replaced with people of intelligence and integrity, not simply honest 'fools', if one may say so!

Surprisingly, the authorities mismanaging the National Museum, even the ministry concerned has not suspended the responsible officials. Why has this not been done? Are they busy now in wasting more money in cataloguing the missing pieces to set up a parallel 'virtual museum' with photographs and descriptive background? It seems the authorities do not seem to care! It is possibly 'easy come; easy go' situation that is now prevailing there!
S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka