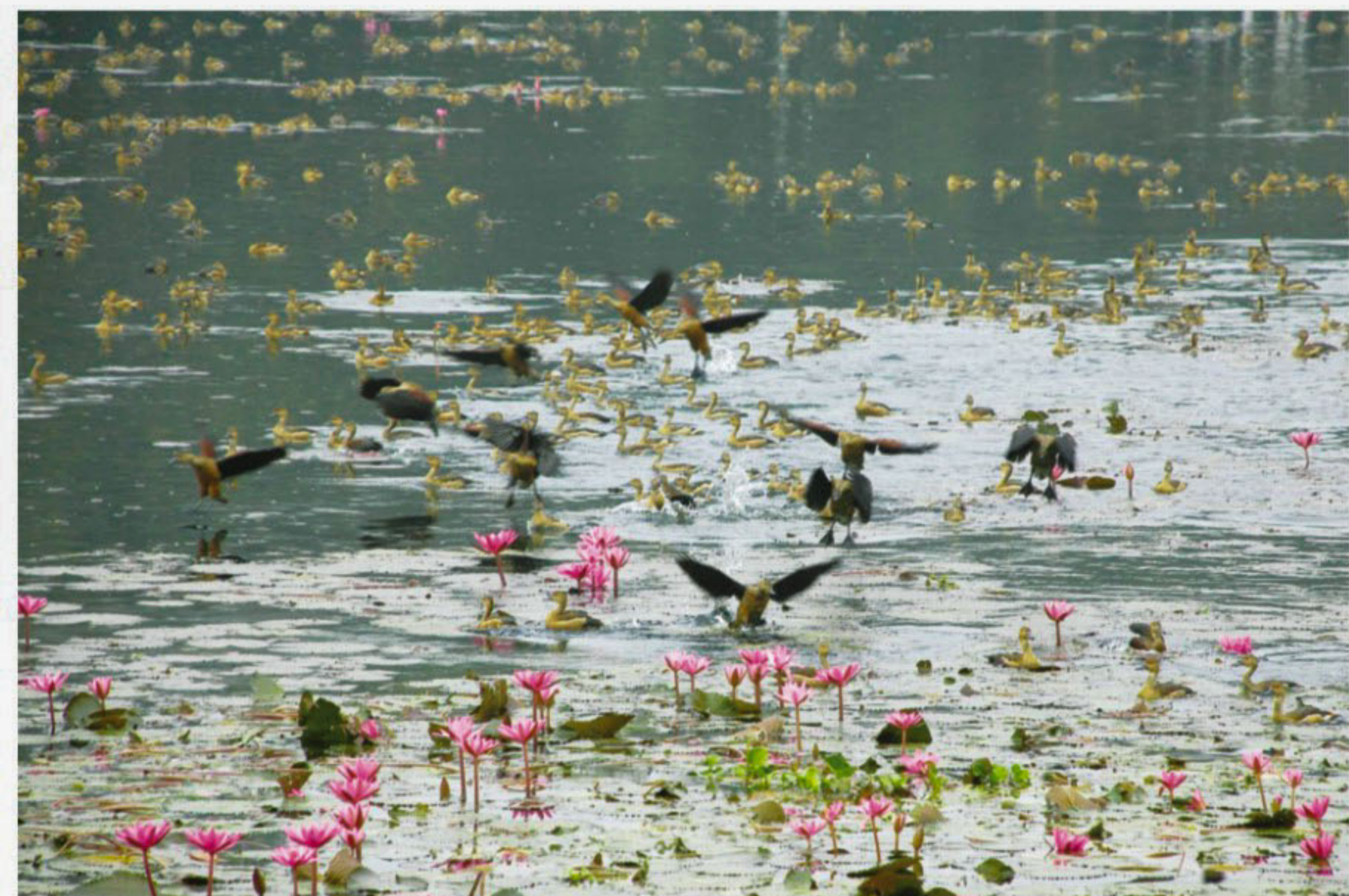


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 250 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

A lonely JU winter



NOOR ALAM / DRINKNEWS

Winter in Jahangirnagar University means a winter with the migratory birds. JU winter doesn't come without migratory birds in the lakes. But this year, it is a different winter we are going through. It is the mid of December, but no migratory birds have arrived yet. Usually, they start arriving in November and they stay here till March.

The university authorities said that the birds would come in their due time. But they have cut the trees without being concerned about the natural balance of

the campus. And also the lakes, where the migratory birds stay at daytime, are being used for commercial fish farming.

The farmers use chemicals in the lakes and cut off the water plants where the birds are supposed to live. As a result, the students, teachers and all the residents of JU campus are passing a lonely winter.

Fahim Ibne Sarwar
Department of International Relations
Jahangirnagar University

Asymmetric information in politics

The Nobel Prize in Economics for 2002 went to three economists who established the ground rules on the 'economics of information'. It deals with asymmetric information between the interacting groups concerned. In plain language, in many cases, the playing field is not level; some known, some unknown. It is an old trick used by the old traditional merchants and the rural moneylenders for gener-

ations in this part of the world (the victims were mostly the illiterates and those less educated). Now the tools have been identified, and the processing analysed; and the system seems to work. Its application in the third world would be revolutionary, if successful. The question is not whether it could be done, but whether the big vested groups would allow it.

This hypothesis should apply in other fields also, for example, politics. The politicians are past masters in

practicing the art of asymmetric information, and thrive on it, taking advantage of the ignorance of the public or the electorate, and showing one side of the coin to the voters. The mass media intervenes and provides some relief (the rule of the journalists and analysts), but the political culture is not changing fast enough in Bangladesh to be more people-oriented. The role of the opposition in the parliament is to balance this asymmetric flow of information. The strength of the oppo-

sition is immaterial, as the opposition provides a channel or mechanism for messages, analysis and criticism suppressed by the ruling regime.
AMMA'abad
Dhaka

Vehicle manufacturing in Bangladesh

This news item was published in most dailies on 4th December. This will herald a very significant milestone in our engineering industry, initiated by the Nitol-Niloy Group in collaboration with Tata. We wish them the best of luck with the light trucks that they propose to start with. Technical people, and possibly all others, will appreciate if the progressive local manufacturing components are identified percentage wise in value over a projected time frame. The value addition for final assembly, and other usual local labour oriented input may also be shown separately.

In my opinion, value wise engine manufacture may possibly be at most around 30 percent of the engine value. Transmission may account for possibly 25 percent of the value of this component. Body and chassis, which is mostly press and stamping operation, may account for another say 25 percent at most. Components like battery, lights and other fixtures may represent some say 20 percent of all add-on fixture values.

My estimates may well be wrong, as I have left the engineering manufacturing sector around mid nineteen seventies. I am sure that

most of the materials, like pig iron for casting, steel sheets for fabrication etc. will all be imported. How much of the engine components will be locally cast, machined and finished? The same applies for the transmission and differential components. It will be interesting if the manufacturers give this break up stage wise, so that we can see how much of it comes from Bangladesh.
Engr. S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Decentralisation a must

Only after posting a letter on the topic, I happened to watch General Ershad delivering his speech at the National Assembly on BTV on December 9, 2010. I listened intently to the deliberations of General Ershad. I thank him for speaking out the truth. Dhaka is perhaps the dirtiest city in the world. On top of this, things are getting further complicated with the arrival of 2000 new immigrants from different parts of the country in search of a livelihood and introduction of about 200 new cars on the streets of Dhaka every day.

General Ershad has rightly pointed out; Dhaka shall soon become unliveable if this trend continues. Dhaka cannot expand beyond its limits to meet the growing demands of the people pouring in from different parts of the country. In order to alleviate the sufferings of the city dwellers, decentralisation of administration is a must.

As was pointed out, most of the government officials live alone at the place of their posting keeping their families in Dhaka in order to ensure better education and welfare of their children. The facilities, for which these families of the government officials live in Dhaka, should be made available all over the country encouraging them to stay at their respective places.

Decentralisation of administration, as pointed out by General Ershad shall ensure an overall development of the country. I once again thank him for highlighting such an important issue in the National Assembly, which deserves appreciation and immediate implementation.
Saleh Ayub
On e-mail

Dynamic leaders

Can't we make a difference from our respective positions? Of course, we can. We just need to change our way of thinking. If we are dedicated and determined, we can contribute a lot in building a prosperous nation.

It takes a few dynamic, honest and sincere leaders, who are committed to making positive changes, to build a prosperous nation. These types of leaders are always remembered.

The world's greatest leaders namely Martin Luther King Jr, Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Mahathir Mohammad, Aung

CNG-run auto-rickshaws

We know that one-third of the population of Dhaka belong to the middle and lower middle class. They face many problems on the streets of Dhaka. When one needs to go to an exam centre to sit for an examination, or a hospital with a patient, s/he needs an affordable transport like CNG-run auto-rickshaw or a rickshaw. But rickshaws are not allowed to ply on every road in Dhaka. Taxi cab is not affordable and available. CNG-run auto-rickshaw is the only option left. Specially, a female student needs an auto-rickshaw to go to her college or university, as the public bus service is not available in all areas of the city.

If the CNG-run auto-rickshaws can be made available, the problem will be solved to a great extent. A CNG-run auto-rickshaw occupies less than half of the place on the road comparing to a car

or a jeep. I saw in Bangalore city that 65,000 LPG-run auto-rickshaws plied the roads whereas the population is 6 million, and all most each middle class family had a small car.

The authorities should encourage CNG-run auto-rickshaws and discourage private vehicles on the streets of Dhaka. But restrictions have been imposed on CNG-run auto-rickshaw. This situation has increased the sufferings of the middle and lower middle class people. I would urge the government to withdraw all sorts of restrictions and allow more CNG-run auto-rickshaws to use the streets of Dhaka and Chittagong for the welfare of the commuters.

Md. Ashraf Hossain
Ramna, Dhaka



STAR

San Suu Kyi will certainly be remembered by the people over for their good deeds. We need a few dynamic leaders like them to build a poverty-free Bangladesh.
Shohag Mostafij
MBA
University of Dhaka

Sales executives' behaviour

One of my relatives came to Dhaka from Canada to spend holidays and went to buy some saris in a well-known superstore in Gulshan. When she pointed to a certain sari to the sales executive to show her, he said to her, "This saree is expensive, its price is.....," as if she won't be able to afford it. My relative was shocked at this attitude, but she bought some saris from there.

This is the behaviour pattern of most of the sales executives at big shopping centres in posh areas of Dhaka. They think as if they are better off than the customers.
Rubab Abdullah Shukla
Residential Area
Dhaka Cantonment
Dhaka

Vandalism

The other day, I saw near Tongi garment workers going berserk demanding pay hike. They looked fanatical while vandalising the vehicles on the street. A few days ago, I was panicked to see the agitated students on Dhaka University campus.

After getting news of any accident, some people take to the street and start vandalising vehicles. They also set fire to the private vehicles. Some of them do it just to enjoy the moment. They do not have any time to think about the aftermaths of such heinous acts. The sane people present there should try to stop them from doing this. At the same time, the government and the authorities concerned should not take any decision that goes against people's interest. At least, the garment workers deserve a decent salary and a good treatment from the owners.
Mobarak Ali
RK Mission Road
Gopibagh, Dhaka

Border killings

When the Bollywood Mega Star Shahrukh Khan was performing at the Army Stadium in Dhaka in presence of thousands of spectators, a Bangladeshi national at Chapai Nawabganj got killed by the Border Security Force of India, as reported in the media.

This incident is not the first of its kind; Bangladeshi nationals get killed almost on a regular basis by the BSF. The point that I would like to emphasize here is that this particular killing took place when the Bollywood Mega Star with his entourage of performers was present in the capital of Bangladesh. I am sure the Indian government was very much aware of his presence in Dhaka. As a gesture of good relation, the

Indian government could have asked its Border Security Force to refrain from killing the poor Bangladeshis at this time.

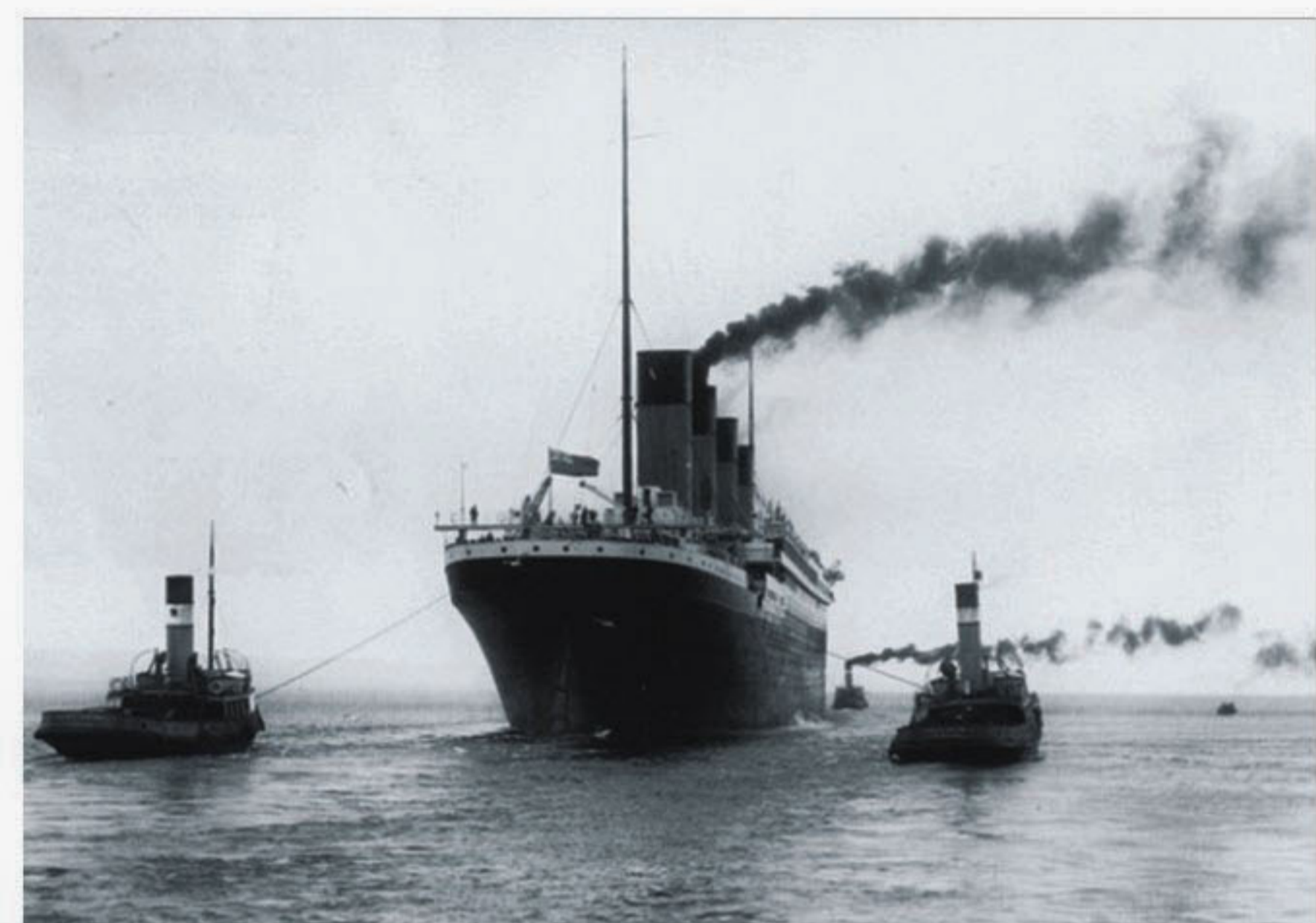
I want to conclude by saying that this action of the BSF is an utter disregard for the people of Bangladesh, whom they sheltered in millions during the nine months war of independence.
Nigar Chowdhury
One-mail

We are proud of Dr. Yunus

It is very shameful and disgusting how our media pounced upon the report of a Danish journalist aired by Norwegian television which sullied Dr. Muhammad Yunus, the Nobel Prize winner. He made our country known to the world by his achievement. The media acted irresponsibly not caring about destroying the image of Bangladesh.

The responses from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister Dipu Moni are very unusual and surprising. Their scathing words are uncalled for; they should have remained silent and tried to uphold the image of the country not to destroy it.

What an unfortunate nation we are, our own people try to ruin our happiness. It is the government's duty to protect the country from any smearing campaign against the institutions of which we are proud of.
Nur Jahan
Chittagong



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Halmonas titanicae

Above is the name of a newly discovered strain of bacteria. The Canadian researchers have discovered this new strain while they detected seven strains of bacteria forming "rusticles" (a formation of rusty masses similar to an icicle) that are slowly eating away the wreckage of the historic RMS Titanic, the world's largest passenger steamship which sank four days after she set off on her maiden voyage from Southampton, England to New York City, USA on April 10, 1912.

The researchers have predicted that the rusticles may totally destroy the historic wreckage of Titanic within 15 years!

Professor M Zahidul Haque
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University
Dhaka

Vilification of GB

I would like to support Dr Muhammad Yunus, the founder of Grameen Bank, who has asserted that a person is innocent until found guilty. Our Prime Minister has voiced her government's decision to probe the matter to find out 'if there was any unauthorised fund transfer' by GB's founder. Soon after the PM's comment for investigation, Dr. Yunus promptly welcomed the move for a probe into the allegations of so-called unauthorised transfer of funds being levelled against Grameen Bank and him as an individual.

It has become a practice for politicians to interfere in the administration of autonomous institutions. Political

power, when extended to the governance of autonomous institutions, tends to sap their energy and destroy them. The tussle between the government and the MD of Grameen Bank seems to be the result of an ego clash.

Politicians should bear in mind that some institutions have achieved pre-eminence over a period of time through the hard and sustained efforts of committed professionals.

Political interference in autonomous institutions and public sector companies is common. The Grameen Bank management has shown the courage to stand up to the Prime Minister. Eminent institutions have built their reputation because of non-interference over the years.

Autonomous institutions are doing yeoman service. Hasty decisions should not be taken with regard to its administration. Ignoring monetary attraction, many continue to serve in such institutions as a labour of love. Their dedication should not be put to test.
Gopal Sengupta
Canada

A live embarrassment

After watching the audience on stage, their interaction with Shahrukh Khan, their body language - I really feel embarrassed to be a Bangladeshi. This has been a live embarrassment at a very hefty cost.
A shocked individual
On e-mail

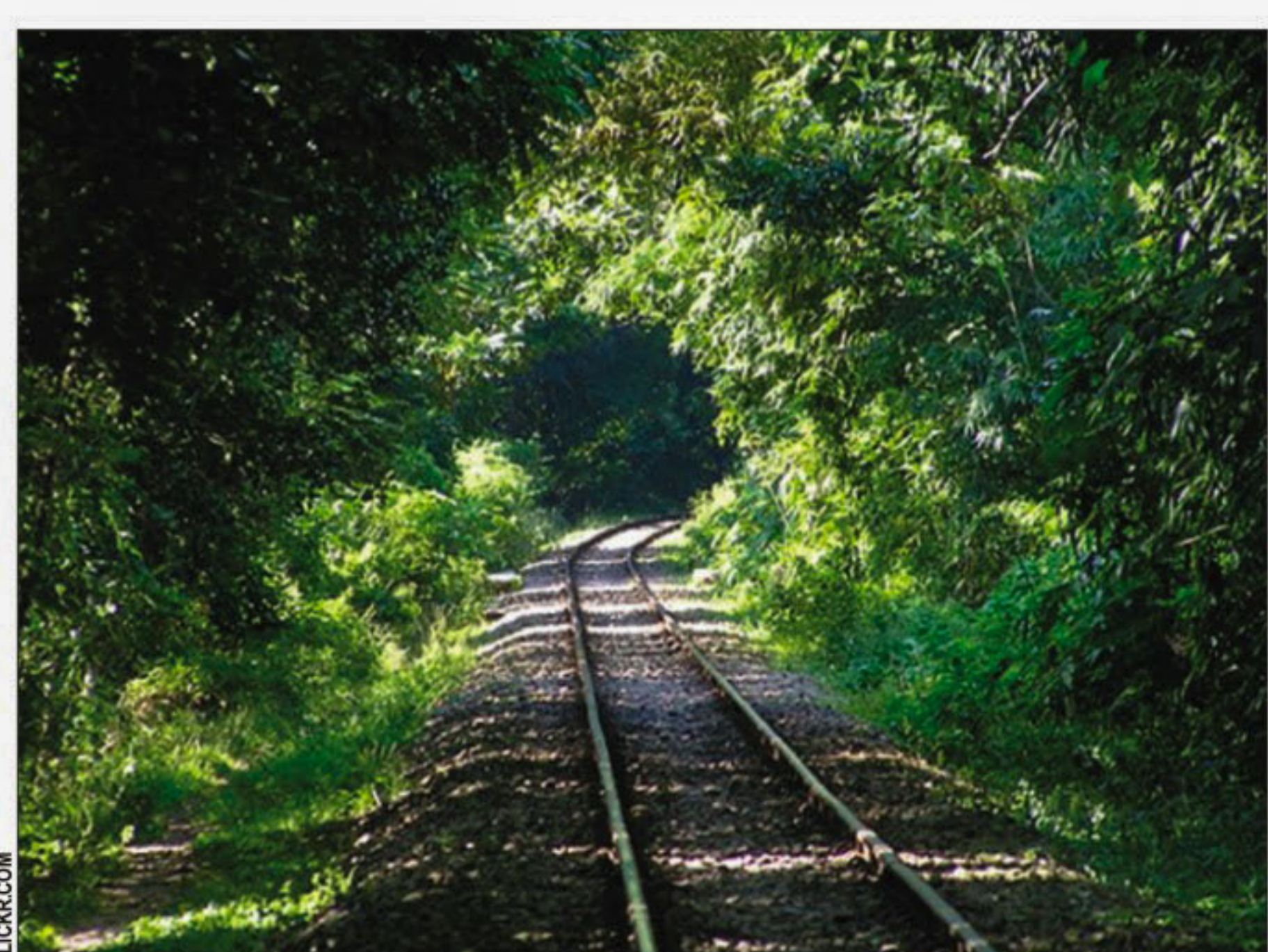
Drilling near reserve forest

The govt. has permitted Chevron Bangladesh to dig three wells for extracting gas near the Lawachhara Reserve Forest (TDS: Dec 11, 2010). One of the three wells is extremely close to the forest and this kind of activity could easily disturb the wildlife of the area. Bangladesh may not be a large country and she may not have a lot of forests, still she boasts a tremendous variety of exotic wildlife.

The proof is in the fact that Sylhet, Chittagong and Chittagong Hill Tracts have been placed in the 'Indo-Burma Hotspot' by biologists. A hotspot is recognised as a small area having massive biodiversity.

Therefore, I urge the authorities to reconsider this project and stop any sort of exploration or extraction activity in the area.

Shahriar Kabir
Student, BUET
Dhaka



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