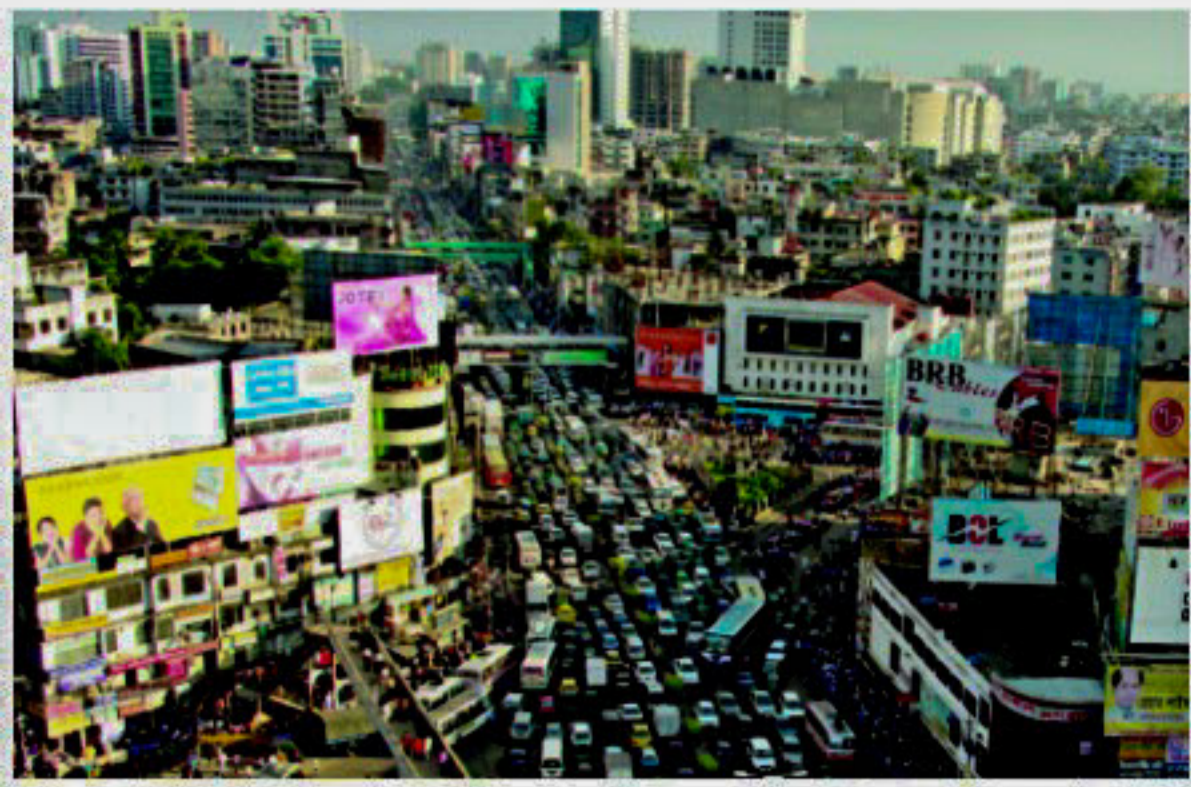


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 150 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

Woes of the capital city



PHOTOS: STAR

Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, is in a very deplorable state. Of course the number of apartments, shopping malls, posh cars and expensive hospitals built in the city, does not go with my statement. But in reality, the citizens are in problem as there is inadequate supply of electricity, gas and water. In many places the water supply is unhygienic and contains pathogens. The basic needs of the people are not being fulfilled. The problem is worsening with every passing day. The roads are jam-packed with vehicles and even most of the footpaths are occupied by hawkers and the pedestrians are forced to walk on the road. The roads are occupied by parked vehicles and in many places more than half of the road is occupied. Unfortunately, the sight is common in most parts of the capital, especially near the malls, hospitals, etc. The public are in a des-

perate situation. Needless to mention the condition of the roads. The potholes on the roads have already caused many accidents, while many are taking place every day. These are like death traps for the bike riders and they also slow down the traffic movement. Unfortunately, the government hospitals are also in a poor condition and they need good governance and good maintenance. We all know these problems but we don't try to find a solution. I expect all the readers of this letter will try to do whatever they can to solve the problems. If we can correct ourselves, then no doubt we can address the issue and do at least something for the country.

Md M Rahman
Old town resident

Eat fresh and help the planet

It has become almost a Herculean task for people to find good foods as fruits, fishes and vegetables available in the market are mixed with formalin and other hazardous preservatives. Eating out is not safe at all as those snacks that are served are fried in stale oil. Even eating dates in Ramadan is not safe nowadays as those are preserved with formalin and medicine.

Whoever thought this would happen? The less one eats market food the better. Hence in this circumstance gardening will help individuals a great deal. It is good, hygienic and economic to plant seasonal vegetables, fruits in house premises. One can choose their front or back yard, balcony and also apartment rooftop for this. One can plant fruit plants like guava, mango, boroj etc. Also planting lemon, chillies, pudina, celery leaf plant, kolmi, pumpkin, lau and other 'shaks' in kitchen veranda is a good idea. This saves one from adulterated food, also by doing this one can very easily give a hand to the planet.

Wise wolf, On e-mail



A.M.AHAD / DRINKNEWS

India must implement water sharing agreement

The people of Bangladesh became disappointed after learning that the much anticipated agreement on sharing Teesta and Feni waters was not going to be signed.

It has been abandoned due to the objection of Paschimanga Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee who in the last moment decided not to accompany Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to Bangladesh. It is very unfortunate and embarrassing as it made millions of people unhappy in Bangladesh and has cast a shadow upon the relations of the two countries.

We have become very disappointed with our Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, for until the last minute she was assuring us that Teesta deal will be signed. and we were feeling hopeful. She has been proved wrong and it became clear how ill-informed she was. She should have known all the facts, it is unacceptable from a person holding such an important position.

The government should reshuffle the foreign ministry, appoint someone who has got all the qualities a minister of foreign affairs should have.

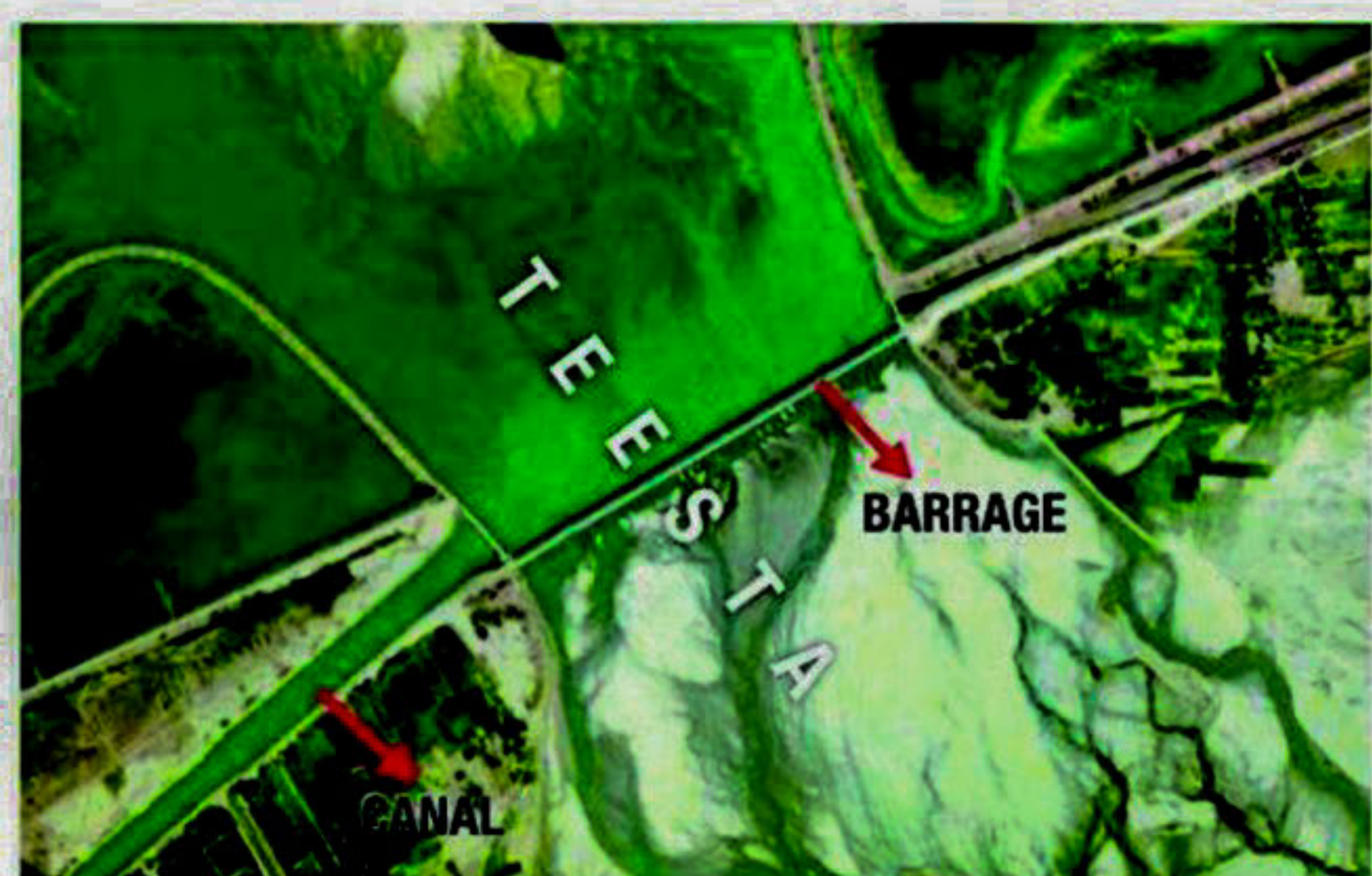
Nur Jahan, Chittagong

A farce, indeed!

The picture shown above is a bird's eye view. Here we can see that the India's portion of Teesta is full of water, but Bangladesh's portion is not. What is the worth of this treaty? It seems there is not an iota of patriotism here. There is no accountability of our leaders. They are just fulfilling their own ambition. Indian politicians are working in their country's interest.

But what are our politicians doing? How can India be our friend, if they are always selfish?

M.A. Faruki, Dhaka



Teesta water and a few questions

It looks like Mamata, the chief minister of Paschimanga, has become a villain for India/Bangladesh treaty with her U turn on the water sharing issue. It is difficult for us to understand what may have changed her mind at the 11th hour. If we go slightly in to details and look around the Indian states surrounding Bangladesh, the question of solving the Mamata puzzle becomes clear and scary at the same time.

Mamata is planning some thing big for sure. It looks like Paschimanga parliament may vote for a separate country named "Paschimanga," which will eventually control the land locked Meghalaya, Assam, Manipur, Tripura & Mizoram on the eastern side of India. And with her wicked politics who knows that all these states of India might make one country with Bangladesh in the middle and may be in the future these ex-Indian states and Bangladesh may share the same ports, rivers and currency. Some sort of a mini-EU.

The entire region is poor and has high population density and the opportunity for foreign investment will increase, if Mamata can come out of Indian fold with the project "Paschimanga. This may sound crazy but it is not impossible as this region already has huge Indian investments and will sure attract foreign countries/companies for heavy investments in sectors like coal, gas, petroleum, telecommunications, beauty products and, of course, tourism. The area will also become very interesting for the West/Nato to monitor China sitting next door.

If that is the case, Bangladesh may find it difficult for the garment exports which is the main foreign currency earner for the country as the poor Paschimanga can be a top competitor.

Bangladesh should consider such a possibility with care.

Sohel Ahmed
Dhanmondi
Dhaka



PHOTO: STAR

Road or death trap?

After the deaths of former finance minister Saifur Rahman, athlete Alam Mahbub, cricketer Rana, Shetu, filmmaker Tareque Masud, media personality Mishuk Munier, how many more such names are required to draw the attention of the authorities concerned? The highways across the country have, so to say, turned into a death trap claiming lives of many talented and eminent personalities. The tragic deaths of acclaimed filmmaker Tareque Masud and CEO of ATN News Mishuk Munier on Dhaka-Aricha highway made the list of high-profile deaths in road accident longer. This is not a sheer accident, but virtually a murder for which the government is responsible. Every year over 3,000 passengers die in road accidents, shows official statistics, while NGOs say it is no less than 12,000. No doubt that this rate is the highest in

the world. Lack of trained drivers, rash driving and lack of punishment are mainly considered as the causes of accidents. But I strongly believe that absence of dividers on the highways is basically at the root of accidents as almost all the cases vehicles collide head-on with another. The realistic solution is to make all our national highways double-lane with dividers all along.

All risky turning points (there are 200 such points, according to BUET) should have indicators and banks maintained at the road bends all over the country. On balance, the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) must undertake stern actions to make traveling smooth and risk-free.

Rakibul Hasan
Senior Officer
Uttara Bank Limited, Dhaka

The constitution is not a scripture

The constitution of Bangladesh is now suddenly elevated to the status of a sacred religious scripture. The media seems to portray it as sacred and sacrosanct. Why so, may I humbly ask? This document is supposed to reflect the hopes and aspirations of our people as well as the values and principles that they cherish and uphold. It is not a divine and infallible edict and criticizing it should not mean that we have to question that person's loyalty, allegiance or patriotism. The constitution itself guarantees the right to free speech. The irony is that the constitution also guarantees certain fundamental human rights and expressly prohibits cruel and unusual punishment. Yet on a daily basis, in the name of remand, citizens routinely face police brutality in the form of threats, intimidation and torture. How do we allow law enforcers to violate and trample a fundamental right and yet want to hold those people accountable who dare to exercise their constitutional right of free speech?

As a nation we have always mixed up our priorities and are now facing the consequences of our frivolous actions. I fervently hope that common sense, reason and good judgment prevails and our sanity is restored.

Abdus Samad
New York, USA

Wrong translation

The Daily Star on 27th August 2011 published a report on 'Shab-e-Qadr'. The report in the last page mentioned "According to the Holy Qur'an, the night is better than 1000 nights..." It was a wrong translation of the Quranic verse.

The same mistake was committed again in the editorial entitled 'Lailatul Qadr', published in the 28th August, 2011 issue of The Daily Star, wherein it was mentioned "The Night of Power is better than a thousand nights."

This verse of the Holy Qur'an was translated by Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall, the first British Muslim to translate the Holy Qur'an. In his 'The Meaning of the Glorious Koran' (first published in 1930), he translated the verse as follows: The Night of Power is better than a thousand months.

The most widely read English translation of the Holy Qur'an is Abdullah Yusuf Ali's "The Holy Qur'an" (published in 1934). He also translates the verse exactly in the same words as mentioned above. In fact, the Arabic word 'Shahr' means month.

Your readers should know the Qur'an correctly as this verse of the Holy Book is quoted by you. If a single person is misled, the responsibility is yours.

R.D. Qureshi
Jasimuddin Avenue
Uttara Model Town
Dhaka

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Tuesday's *The Daily Star* report headlined "Metro rail stops at air force red signal"

Rahim Quashem

Does Bangladesh Air Force run the government or the government runs Bangladesh Air Force?

Anonymous

The armed forces should have been consulted. I am very surprised that they were kept out of this.

Jams

Relocation of air force and cantonment from the heart of the city is feasible and accepted option because Dhaka cannot afford any luxury to spare such a lucrative offer from JICA.

Hasan

The old airport should be shut down and relocated. You cannot have an airbase in the middle of the city. The metro needs to go on. PM needs to show leadership here and reject air force concerns.

Nasirullah Mridha

Who is mighty in our country? Air force or the elected government? When for public interest metro rail is about to be set up in city, how could air force meddle in the government's business?

Frustrated

Someone explain to me, why do we need the old airport? And doesn't the air force already have an air base inside the cantonment?

Ziauddin Ali Ahmed

As I have observed, no aircraft lands at that airport except some helicopters. So, helicopters do not need that long runway. And the air force already has an airport at Kurmitola.

Rimon

If air force finds it obstructive, please extend the existing runway toward north. A runway is already there. Just renovate and make the northern portion usable. It will solve the problem.

Rashid Chowdhury

It would be unfortunate for the people of Dhaka if the project does not materialise due to air force's objection. Hope all the parties will compromise and solve the problem amicably for the better interest of common people.

Ameen Sayeed

Please shift the air force landing place out of the city limit. We do not need air force base as the supersonic jets go to the Bay of Bengal for practice. Move all army structure out of the city limit or make all the cantonment area accessible for public movement to ease traffic congestion.

John Silver

All these experts had submitted a plan and got it approved from the cabinet that would leave the airport non-functional. If you ask a dentist to do a heart surgery, you can't expect more than this. Tejgaon airport needs to remain fully functional not only for emergency but also for carrying out disaster relief operations during the time of need.

Tabassum Haque

I don't know why Bangladesh Army and air force authorities are creating unwanted barriers. We don't want to see the old airport and Dhaka cantonment inside Dhaka. Relocate these outside Dhaka and make us free from the unbearable traffic jam. We want to see metro rail within the shortest possible time. We sincerely hope that the current govt. would make plans for a few more routes during their tenure.

Shubhro Ahmed

I believe, combat aircraft and military transport aircraft do not need the length of a jumbo jet's runway. With the expansion of Dhaka city, air force base is now right in the middle of the city, something that is not good for the security of the air force. Considering all pros and cons let us try to accommodate things for the country's development's sake.