

# The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR  
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## Open manholes turning into death traps

**Authorities must ensure public safety**

SHANU Miah, a middle-aged man, fell to death in an open box culvert in the Paltan area this week. The High Court has summoned the managing director of Dhaka Wasa and the chief executive officer of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) to explain why they should not be held responsible for leaving the manhole unprotected.

These uncovered manholes are a serious threat and have previously been the reason behind many such preventable deaths. The highly publicised cases of three-year-old Jihad who died after falling into a 600-foot deep shaft in 2014 and of four-year-old Nirob who met a similar fate exactly a year later apparently did nothing to prompt concerned authorities into action.

The MD of Wasa squarely denied responsibility for the death of Shanu Miah since the manhole was reportedly being used for cleaning sewer drains, a task carried out by private contractors. But the superintending engineer for drainage of Wasa admitted that the organisation, along with private contractors, is partly responsible for ensuring public safety. The contradictory statements of the two officials do little to restore public confidence in Wasa which has often resorted to blame game every time one of these open culverts results in someone's death.

The comments made by Wasa authorities are dissatisfactory to say the least. Outsourcing jobs to private contractors does not mean that Wasa is exempt from supervising and ensuring public safety during the proceedings of projects that fall under its purview. It is high time that Wasa prioritises safety before anything else and institutes strict measures to get rid of this public nuisance.

## She stands out from the crowd

**SP Shamsunnahar has set an example**

AS we observed International Women's Day yesterday, it was very inspiring to find a news report on a woman police officer take it upon herself to start a 'Help Cell' to settle family discords in Chandpur where she is the Superintendent of Police (SP). Discord ranges from dowry-related problems to divorce, and thanks to her intervention as mediator, some 700 families have been saved from breaking up since she started working on the issue from January 1. Taking time out of her busy schedule, Shamsunnahar addresses problems of family members irrespective of age, hearing some 50 cases on a daily basis.

We would like to thank the SP for thinking outside the box and addressing a serious problem in our society. Having such a service opens up the possibility for resolving sensitive cases such as these by allowing complainants to resolve the situation amicably with the help of the police, which would otherwise have ended up in lengthy legal battles. The Help Cell led by Shamsunnahar has been able to settle 70 percent of the 1,000 complaints received so far. We are encouraged to find that the SP has taken it up with officers from various police stations, circle officers and also crime teams under her jurisdiction to help out with difficult cases.

It is rare to find officers like her who actually take innovative measures to help out common folks. We would like to thank her, as would a lot of people who have benefitted from her intervention, and she should serve as an example to both men and women who wear the uniform.

# The state of Trump's America

STRATEGICALLY SPEAKING



BRIG GEN SHAHEDUL ANAM KHAN NDC, PSC (RETD)

ACCORDING to President Donald Trump, a great wave of change is blowing over the huge landmass of America. Indeed so! It is a change that has seen a huge spike in the number of hate crimes in the US. Synagogues and mosques have been targeted, Muslim women have been subjected to harassment, so far several Indians, including a Sikh, have been shot and one of them has died as a consequence. Anti-Semitic and Islamophobic rhetoric is on the rise to a level that in one instance recently several Muslims in Oklahoma who wanted to meet their Congress representative were given a questionnaire to fill which included the question, "Do you beat your wife?"

The first travel ban, perhaps the most ill-considered and shabbily drafted document to emerge from the White House ever, did not pass muster with the courts. One of the seven countries from which entry into the US was temporarily halted is under virtual US occupation, its soldiers laying down their lives fighting alongside the US forces to see the end of a violent un-Islamic phenomenon that has done immense harm to Islam as never before.

Notwithstanding the shift one noticed in the State of the Union address of President Trump on February 28, many expect significant lack of sync between what he tried to convey to the American people that day, and his articulated intention that manifested into action through the plethora of presidential decrees since he assumed office less than fifty days ago. The one hour of his sweet words in the Congress, many feel, will not compensate the one month of his inflammatory and abrasive comments.

America is unique. Only in America can a billionaire populist businessman, and a TV talk show host to boot, with very little between the ears insofar as

governance and political leadership is concerned, can occupy the White House. And the world can only hope, as it watches in wonder, that many of the Trump voters would by now have realised that they have let loose a bull in the china shop who will not stop until every bit of the china in the shop, finely crafted painstakingly over the years, has been destroyed. And it seems he will use every day of the four years he has at his disposal to destroy the existing world order, which one must admit is not without its shortcomings though, that will very likely be replaced, at best, by a

doing. His is the tone that rings in the utterances of dictators or would-be dictators and autocrats -- equating the government with the state and the people. That makes it easier for the administration to go after anybody with anti-government proclivity to be portrayed as anti-state or anti-people. It may be an odious comparison, but we need to be reminded of the unpalatable truths from time to time, that many autocrats were popularly elected to start with. Only difference is Trump does not have the majority of the voters in his side.

The American media, the non-plant

media which, among other things, throws only friendly questions at him. And the rest of the media, which exposes the follies and the lies of the administration, which some of the White House staff, including its main occupant, so nonchalantly dispense, is depicted as the "enemy of the people". And we now have a new euphemism for a lie -- alternative facts, that Trump and his principal advisors are making the Americans swallow. The "unfriendly" media is being considered by the new US administration as the main opposition in the US. Isn't that the natural



SOURCE: INDISCRETO.INFO.COM

*President Trump has employed the "divide and rule" policy by dividing the media, and there is now the "friendly" media which, among other things, throws only friendly questions at him. And the rest of the media, which exposes the follies and the lies of the administration, is depicted as the "enemy of the people".*

state of total disorder. And the first signs of that is the government, in a country that prides itself on its Bill of Rights, is moving in haste and inexorably towards an autocratic dispensation by trying to pit the media as anti-people.

Trump has been carrying on with his electoral narratives, in election mode. And many apprehend that generally those that gain office through promises of fascism tend to follow through, as Trump is

ones, is now the main foe of the new administration, replacing the age old foe, the Big Bear. And for those of us who live in this part of the world may find similarities in the way Trump and his administration is treating the media in the US and the way media in some of our countries in South Asia is treated. President Trump has employed the "divide and rule" policy by dividing the media, and there is now the "friendly"

disposition of autocrats towards the fourth estate?

When frustrations and desperation drive the President to bar some members of the print and electronic media from the White House, it doubly validates the apprehension that the Trump administration may well be on the slippery slope to fascism.

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# Getting climate finance to where it is needed most

POLITICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE



SALEEMUL HUQ

OVER the last decade, developed countries have contributed tens of billions of US dollars in climate finance to developing countries to support both

mitigation actions (to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases that cause climate change), as well as adaptation (to tackle the adverse impacts of climate change).

Most of the funding has gone to support mitigation actions in a few of the larger developing countries such as China, India, Brazil, Indonesia and South Africa while only a small proportion has gone to the most vulnerable and poorest developing countries, such as Bangladesh, for adaptation.

At the eight annual international conference on community based adaptation (CBA8) held in Nepal in 2014, the Kathmandu Declaration was adopted with three major demands. The first demand was for global climate funding to be divided equally between mitigation and adaptation. The second was to demand that when allocating such climate funds, all developing countries give half of it to the most vulnerable communities for adaptation. The third demand was for all climate funders, both global and national, to provide information on how much of their funding goes to the most vulnerable communities.

There has been a significant victory at the board of the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the main channel for global climate funds from developed to developing countries, regarding the first demand to allocate global adaptation funding equally with mitigation

funding. The GCF Board has made the laudable decision to allocate its funds equally between mitigation and adaptation. It has further decided to prioritise the adaptation funding to the most vulnerable developing countries, namely the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as well as the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), which includes Bangladesh. However, the flow of funds from the GCF is still quite slow, thus even the funds allocated for adaptation in the most vulnerable countries have yet to reach their intended beneficiaries in many cases.

The GCF is not the only channel through which climate funds are flowing. A recent review of all sources and channels of climate funding done by

that has an explicit target of 30 percent to reach the local level. Also worth mentioning is the Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility (LoCAL) of the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF).

With regard to the demand for national governments in developing countries allocating at least half their climate funds to the most vulnerable, only Nepal has a clearly stated policy of allocating 80 percent of their climate funds to the local level to support their Local Adaptation Plans of Action (LAPAs). A number of countries in Africa, including Kenya and Tanzania, are developing climate funds to channel funding to the local level, although it is too early to say if they are effective.

other local level funds for disaster risk reduction which can be used to gain knowledge on climate adaptation funding.

Based on this brief report card of the current situation regarding the flow of climate funds from global to national levels, and then from national to local levels, the verdict is firm. Both the developed countries providing the funds and the developing countries receiving the funds must do better.

The developed countries providing the climate funds for adaptation have to do a much better job of tracking their funding more transparently. The climate fund intermediaries, such as the GCF, as well as others such as UNDP and World Bank, also need to be better at speeding



SOURCE: EXAMSWATCH.COM

*A recent review done by the IIED based in the UK found that only about 10 percent of global climate funds can be shown to be reaching the communities or local levels where the most vulnerable people live.*

the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) based in the UK found that only about 10 percent of global climate funds can be shown to be reaching the communities or local levels where the most vulnerable people live. The report also found that it is still very difficult to find transparent information that enables tracking of the funds to the local level. This lack of transparency is valid both for global and national funds.

Amongst the donors, two are worth mentioning for their explicit adoption of community and local level funding, namely, the community based adaptation (CBA) fund of the small grants programme (SGP) of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the Local Solutions Programme of USAID

Over the last decade, Bangladesh has received several hundred million US dollars of climate finance from developed countries through the Bangladesh Climate Resilience Fund (BCRF), and has also allocated several hundred million US dollars worth in taka from the national budget through the Bangladesh Climate Trust Fund (BCTF).

Both these funds have explicitly allocated 10 percent of their available funds to reach local communities through NGOs managed by the Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation (PKSF).

The remaining 90 percent climate funds have been allocated through different government ministries and agencies, where, in many cases, it is difficult to track if any of it went to local or community level. However, there are

the delivery of adaptation funds that they manage, and also ensure that they can provide transparent information to track if it is reaching (and benefiting) the most vulnerable communities.

Finally, developing countries, including Bangladesh, need to consider adopting a policy to prioritise allocations of climate funds to the most vulnerable communities in the most vulnerable parts of the country.

They also need to develop transparent and robust systems at the national level to track the funds and ensure that they indeed reach and help the most vulnerable communities at the local level.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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### We need more parking spaces

The dearth of parking space has become a real problem with the growth of multistoried buildings. These same properties would previously be owned by a single occupant. Now, each building comprises of 10-15 flats, whose multiple owners require a large number of vehicle spaces in the parking area.

A lot of cars are also seen to be parked alongside the roads due to insufficient parking spaces, which creates further pressure on the already dense traffic in our cities. I would suggest that vehicles be exempted from having to pay fines or being towed away from in front of school premises during school hours, when the cars have to wait for a while to pick up children from classes. I hope the traffic officials will take this suggestion into consideration.

Meanwhile, we need a greater number of parking spaces across the city, particularly in commercial areas.

Sirajul Islam  
Paribagh