

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

Climate change bringing its own set of conflicts



IN 2014, United Nations tweeted, "Peace means dignity, well-being for all, not just absence of war". The statement couldn't have been closer to the truth: peace is not just the absence of war, it is the building of inclusive societies, where people can live with dignity and coexist in harmony with each other.

However, the spiraling problem of climate change has added a new dimension to the concept of peace. Peace is no longer just being threatened by violence—climate change has the potential to unleash a chain of events that can lead to war and conflict.

According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), more than seven million people had been displaced worldwide in the first six months of this year by extreme weather events such as, landslides, tornados, and floods; while as many as 22 million people might be displaced by the end of the year. What is alarming here is that IDMC suggests that this figure is double the number of people who had been displaced due

Bangladesh is considered to be at the frontline of the climate change crisis. According to Global Climate Risk Index 2019, Bangladesh ranked seventh among the countries most affected by extreme weather events in 20 years since 1998. The country is facing various climate related problems like droughts, rising sea levels, land erosion, cyclones, rising temperatures, flood, increased salinity, loss of cultivable lands and so on. According to International Monetary Fund, one-third of Bangladesh's population is at risk of displacement in the face of rising sea levels.

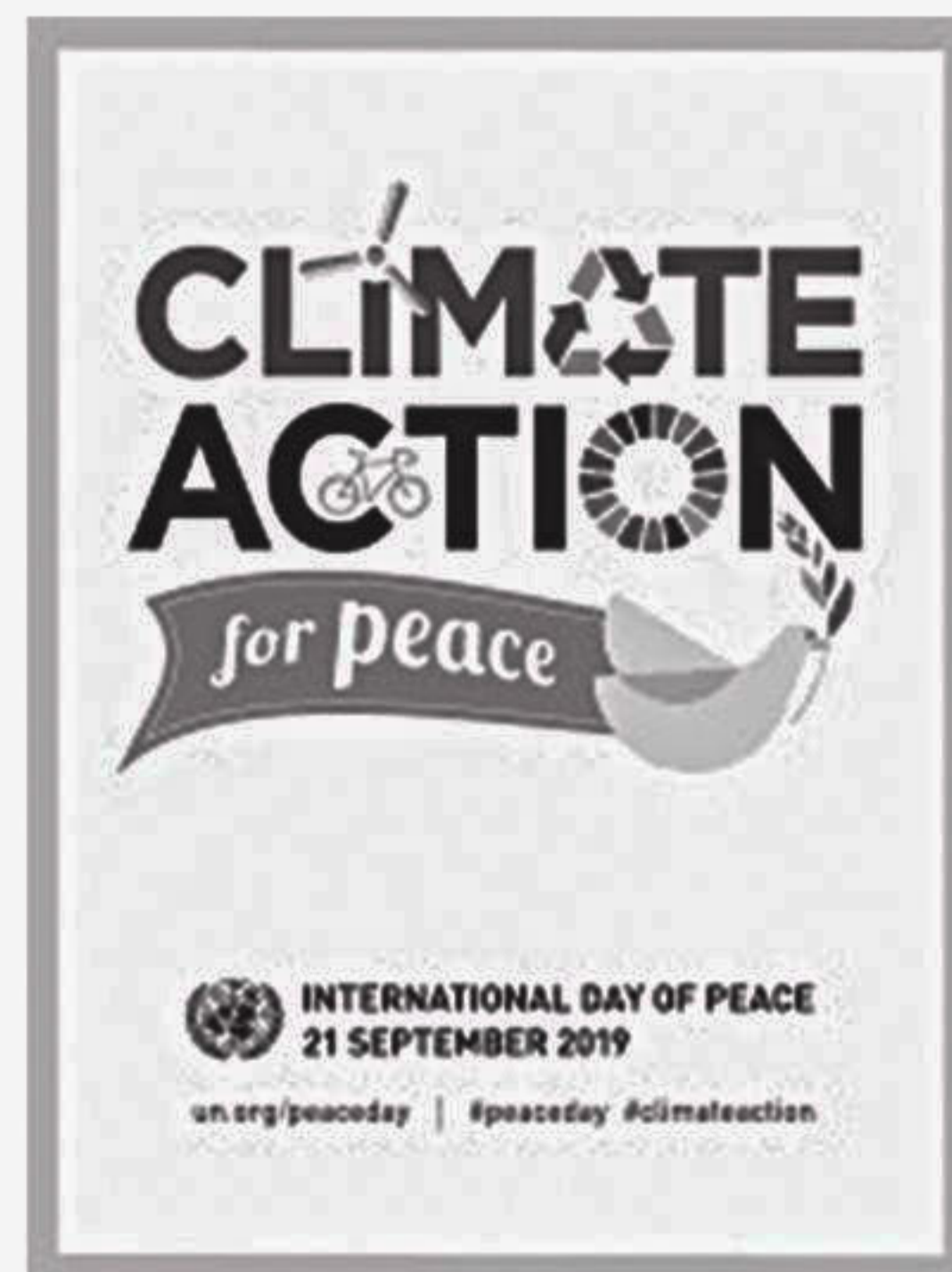
Thousands of children from various school and colleges joined the global climate strike in Dhaka yesterday, as part of a global movement inspired by Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg. They staged demonstrations at the capital's Manik Mia Avenue calling upon the world leaders to act against climate change. This highlights the urgency of initiatives that are required to address climate change worldwide.

According to report by Germanwatch, a Berlin-based environmental organisation, in 2017, 407 people died in Bangladesh as a result of extreme weather-related events like storms, cyclones, floods and landslide. The country also suffered an economic loss of about \$2826.68 million due to climate change.

Environmental degradation presents multidimensional problems for the country. It can cause loss of livelihood, affect social constructs and lead to unhealthy competition for depleting resources, leading to tensions, crimes and violence.

Loss of goods and property, and agricultural land due to flood or river erosion can cause tension among the affected people, since these limit their economic opportunities, make food scarce and consequently put them in a desperate struggle for control of cultivable land. The loss and degradation of land also lead to increased unemployment. This also potentially triggers crimes, as desperate people resort to whatever means they can to earn their sustenance. Moreover, this leads to internal migration, as people move to other areas—especially big cities—in search of subsistence.

As per a *Deutsche Welle* report, in August 2017 flood had drowned the land and crops of 6.8 million people in northwestern Bangladesh. The land that was totally submerged accounted for over 16,000 hectares, while another 560,000 hectares of crops were partially damaged by the flood. According to official estimates, in 2017 alone, the livelihoods of at least eight million people living in Bangladesh had been affected by flood. And flood is just one of the many outcomes of climate change. In addition, increased salinity of water due to



rising sea level is not only making water a scarce resource, but is also severely affecting farming. This is encouraging competition for access to useable/drinkable water, leading to unrest and clashes. Health complications are also on the rise in areas affected by rising water salinity, as people who are being forced to drink this water, often end up with serious health problems. This also potentially triggers internal migration, as people are often forced to seek livelihood elsewhere when the water in their areas become contaminated.

The loss of habitable, cultivable land, droughts, storms and other problems faced by the people living in rural areas are forcing them to migrate to cities, adding further pressure on our strained resources. According to Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 78,000 people were displaced in Bangladesh between January 1 and December 31, 2018, due to disasters. As of December 31, 2018, the total number of internally displaced in Bangladesh stood at 426,000.

The constant outflow of people from rural areas of Bangladesh to the cities, due to depletion of resources and shrinking employment and livelihood opportunities are resulting in major problems for urban planning and management. After migration these people, if lucky, end up in slums, where lives are always at risk of fire hazards

among other potentially fatal threats. These internally displaced people add to the burden of unemployment, overpopulation and increase tension over sharing of the already strained resources, causing resentment among the city dwellers. This social stress can be a trigger for unrest and conflict.

Moreover, often the displaced people have to resort to criminal means to earn their livelihoods: peddling drugs, mugging and getting involved in other crimes. This creates further unrest in the society, causing fear and antipathy among the residents. The migrants often have trouble assimilating with the existing residents, as the latter see them as "outsiders" and often blame them for unemployment and underemployment.

The Bangladesh government has taken up pragmatic steps to address the problem of climate change. It has developed the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) and cleared the Delta Plan 2100 in order to combat the negative impacts of climate change. These measures are commendable; however, the government must follow through.

The policy makers must also take measures to address the immediate problems created by climate change. The authorities should focus on empowering local administration with resources and decision-making capacity to address the issues locally, since most of these climate related problems are localised, and consider decentralisation of the capital and relocate key industries and institutions to the outskirts of the city to take off the extra load. It should also ensure proper implementation of the climate adaption and mitigation strategies to avert the bigger problems that would surface in the long-run.

The Bangladesh government must strongly urge the world leaders at the upcoming UN Climate Summit to take immediate measures to address global climate emergencies and urge America to come back to the Paris Agreement and work with the other countries in fighting climate change.

Efforts at global, regional and, most importantly, national levels are required to make the world more peaceful by eliminating the risks posed by climate change. Historically war has been about resources, and depletion of resources by climate change has the potential to push the world towards further wars. It is high time, our government and world governments roll up their sleeves and get down to meaningful actions, in order to bring sustainable peace to the world.

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to regional violence and conflict.

Appreciating the threats posed by climate change, the United Nations has declared "Climate action for peace" as the theme of this year's International Day of Peace. United Nations Secretary General, while declaring the theme said, "Today peace faces a new danger: the climate emergency, which threatens our security, our livelihoods and our lives. That is why it is the focus of this year's International Day of Peace. And it's why I am convening a Climate Action Summit."

#Facebook



Facebook has about 2.5 billion users, including 3.5 crore 'tech-savvy' Bangladeshi users, i.e. 20 percent of the country's population.

PHOTO: DADO RUVIC/REUTERS

Knowledge is for sharing, he believes. But, his post is often outdated, e.g. an urgent appeal for O-negative blood was two years old. He hates it when there is no "share" option.

Some Facebookers lift blogs to uplift their prestige. Plagiarising Pundits have no scruples about copying and pasting, including wrong information and erroneous spelling. When criticised, they blame the original author.

Quizzical Queenie will signal a red alert among her friends. She goes, "Never knew the world was so cruel", and a week later, "I shall not give up". Suicidal? Nah... Fishing for compliments because in between she replaced her profile pic with a glamorous selfie.

Then there is Sewerage Shuja, whose idea of smartness is to insert an F-word after every three words. Although no one is paying him by word count, the foul words make his incoherent sentences longer.

Emotive Ella goes mawkishly gooey because she is leaving her office, where she worked for ten

days. "I shall miss my pink pretty wall", she writes. Her friends express consolation with online hugs in her hour of severe distress. On the pink wall hangs a pennant that says, "You shall be missed". Awww... It was for Shelly, who worked there for thirty years.

Mysterious Munni will only show her manicured feet, a bracelet lazily around her ankle. Another shows her nose-flower. She captions them, "Ah! This is life". Inquisitive you explore her profile pic. It is a clipart silhouette of a little girl.

Some posts are meant for scrolling down because they are long. The author narrates his Dada's marriage to his Dadu, how his Chachas deprived his Dad (the good guy), then he went abroad to study, where he met this girl, who knew his Chacha from a friend. ... If you are still interested, please send a friend request to Long-post Novel.

Heart blockage, weak bladder, migraine, backache, fading eyesight, and anything you need a doctor for, Medical Mridha will have an alternate

way out. He wants to help outside of the box. Last week he visited his dentist for his *akhel daat*. Sugarcane juice did not work, he explained in sign language.

Your cousin Relations Rowly's posts are about his Mama, or Chachi, or mother-in-law of his wife's cousin. Their marriage ceremonies, *doa mahfil*, job promotions, and children's results are at your fingertip to avoid.

Pessimistic Poltu deals with disappointments, depression, and disasters, taking pleasure in foreseeing a bleak future. Water shortage, leaded air, and poisoned fish are some of his patent armaments for instilling mass fear. Dhaka will be a non-liveable city, he has been posting over the last ten years. He has not left the capital.

Anti-government Sarkar sees no pillar in the under-construction Jamuna Bridge, is certain other countries will stop recruiting Bangladeshi workers, and is convinced that Bangladeshi cricketers have been performing poorly because of the Bangladesh Bank heist. Avoid him.

Comparing Karmakar remains busy posting how many years we are behind which country, where stand our universities in global ranking, and the price of rice in Guatemala. He was fuming when reminded that we shall always remain six hours ahead of Britain.

Cricket Board is responsible, football federation is corrupt, women footballers deserve better, are all on the wall of Sports Gama. He does not drop a catch, or miss a goal.

Faceless Farzana will request for friendship. Alas! Her profile is locked. After messaging her, she texts back, "Bhaiya, it's open now". Her profile pics include Alice in Wonderland, Little Miss Muffet, Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Adele, and Kabori.

Such diversity makes life interesting, and even running a society of apartment owners difficult. Now, if you will excuse me, I have to get back to Facebook.

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Iam dazed and dejected, but not down. This chap is such a *beyadab*. He deserves one big thappar.

What has the world come to, as if we were never young?

Rhetoric of the above kind one encounters should visiting Facebook be a consistent compulsion. Whether to react (emoji

or comment) depends on the time one has, or patience. The weaker ones fall prey to the trap, "none should leave without giving a 'Like'".

Despite all the jocular criticism levelled, Facebook has about 2.5 billion users, including 3.5 crore "tech-savvy" Bangladeshi users, i.e. 20 percent of the country's population. Stitched together in the biggest network of the world, there is diversity as in the legendary *nokshi kantha*.

There is Peeping Pintu. He is a discreet visitor via an incognito window, and doesn't want to get involved. His friend Voyeur Bhuiyan though is shadier because he likes to watch.

Liker Latif will like anything, from birthdays to obituaries, weddings to divorces, and trivia to tragedies. Not a thinker, so a happy user.

Critical Karishma is quite the opposite. Her right hand finds fault in her left for the bizarre possibility that it is half a centimetre shorter. She will critique a rose for its thorns, a win for the margin of victory and *katchi biryani* for too much mutton.

Blue Moon Babul visits the site perhaps thrice a year. He maintains an account as a status symbol in his social circle. Occasionally he needs a reminder from a real-life friend to catch up.

Multiple Mohsin has three accounts, two of which with the same profile picture. No one knows why. One guess is that he did not know how to retrieve a lost password. But, Critical Karishma thinks he is just a show off.

Global Ganesh shares images of beach turtles in Mexico, and videos of tomato festival in Spain.

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

September 21, 1985
North and South Korea opened their borders for their family reunion programme

Similar reunion programmes have been arranged in subsequent years by the two governments.

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BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker

THIS IS A COMBAT ZONE, COOKIE. YOU SHOULD BE WEARING A HELMET

WHY THE POT ON YOUR HEAD, COOKIE?

I DIDN'T BRING MY COLANDER

GREGG MORTZ WALKER

BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott

SO THEN A MAN PAINTED SOMEWHAT AND PENNIE GOES HAH BUT THEY DIDN'T SEE MRS GLEBBINS STANDING THERE SO SHE WOULD BE JUST WENT CRAZY BECAUSE THE BOY SHAD JUST GOTTEN CAUGHT STEALING THE WHITE BOARD PENS AND SHE HAD TO CLEAN THEM...

AND WHAT HAPPENED IN YOUR CLASS TODAY?

NUTHIN.

ARE YOU SURE YOU TWO GO TO THE SAME SCHOOL??

QUOTABLE Quote

NELSON MANDELA
(1918 – 2013)
SOUTH AFRICAN ANTI-APARTHEID REVOLUTIONARY, POLITICAL LEADER AND PHILANTHROPIST

Peace is not just the absence of conflict; peace is the creation of an environment where all can flourish regardless of race, color, creed, religion, gender, class, caste or any other social markers of difference.