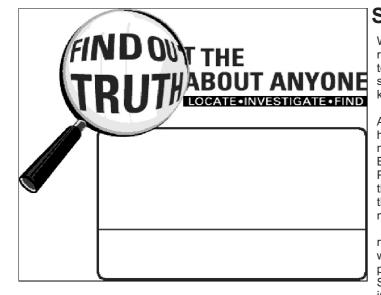
The Daily Star

DHAKA MONDAY JUNE 16, 200

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 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.



## SQ Chowdhury, OIC and defamation case

Well done Mahfuz Anam and Motiur Rahman the editors of The Daily Star and Prothom Alo respectively. It is the sacred duty, responsibility and obligation of every journalist to write and tell the truth as well as publish objective news without any fear and favour. "It is better to live a single day like a lion than to live hundred days like a lamb." We the people have got the right to know what is happening in the country.

Salauddin Quader Chowdhury made highly objectionable remark about our Bangla culture, Amor Ekushey and the Bangalee women at the function of the Jamatee Islami at Feni, the home constituency of PM Khaleda Zia on 31st May 2003 which was published in most of the newspapers including the Ingilab. This shows that he is still an anti-Bangalee and anti-Bangladeshi person. He filed defamation case against the editors of the Daily Star and The Prothom Alo, why not against the editors of the Ingilab and The Dinkal which also published the same news? SQ Chy hurled abusive words at your party chief Khaleda Zia and her son at the Press Club on the 29th April 2001 which was published in the newspapers and weekly magazines.

Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu MP, along with other members of the Parliament of the party BNP removed Professor AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury from the post of Presidency for not laying wreaths at the mazar of Shaheed Zia and also not mentioning him as a proclaimer of Independence. BNP thought it was an insult to Shaheed Zia. Well, then why BNP support Salauddin Quader Chowdhury for the post of Secretary General of the OIC when he openly insulted Shaheed Zia and his family? Iqbal Ahmed, Dhaka

It is really distressing that the nation is passing through a sort of commotion over the nomination of a Secretary General for the OIC, which could otherwise be simply a normal matter. It is a pity that the peoples' right to know has been callously compromised by implicating distinguished editors like Mr. Mahfuz Anam and Mr. Motiur Rahman. The matter is now in the court and the hon'ble court will decide who is right or what is right.

It's a rare chance for Bangladesh to nominate a Secretary General to an international body like OIC. Everybody expects that the nominee of Bangladesh should be person of international standing, a seasoned diplomat of extraordinary capability who has the potential to put OIC in order and can enhance not only the icons of Bangladesh, but also that of the OIC. There is no reason to believe that the policymakers are unaware of such potential personalities in Bangladesh, albeit it is not understood as to why such controversies are allowed to create, at the cost of nothing but our very national image. Hafeejul Alam

"Dhaka's growing noise pollu- tion" The Daily Star report, 'Dhaka's growing noise pollution" (June 14) deserves appreci- ation. It is true that the media is making all out contribution for reducing pollution. I would like to include one item which causes severe noise pollution in the resi- dential area. Brick braking machine is one of the many nuisances which creates noise beyond 80 decibels. This machine needs to be modified to minimise ts sound. Ziaul Uttara, Dhaka	erly monitored and controlled for the interest of the public. <b>S. R. Hussain</b> <i>Mohakhali, Dhaka</i> <b>Domession</b> <b>And Second</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Domession</b> <b>Dom</b>	different forms, in the newspapers (most efficient way), radio, TV, magazines, those huge billboards and so many other ways. But I do not like the idea of someone putting up a poster in my wall! We are becoming a devel- oped nation day by date and we should put an end to this absurdity. I am sure many of you will say that this has been a tradition and should go on. But think of the people who have to spend heaps in repainting their walls on and on. Think of how neat and clean it would have been without these posters. When you go to a more developed country the first thing you notice is how neat and clean it is com- pared to Bangladesh.	Mastermind School, Dhaka Superpower USA After the Iraq war it has been established beyond any iota of doubt that the only hyper power of the world is the USA and naturally the most powerful man in the world is the President of USA. Even the leaders of erstwhile superpower and other major powers includ- ing nuclear powers would think twice before disagreeing with the US President on a ny issue. Whether one likes it or not this is the reality and this is the New World Order. As far as rest of the world is concerned whatever the US President says is the law and what	looking not so good. The Israeli Army is using helicopter gunships at will to kill civilians in the Ghaza Strip. Earlier it was widely believed that Israel is a dependable foothold for the US in the Middle East and it is through Israel that the US would look after her interest in the Middle East. Therefore, there was every reason for the US to be soft on Israel. But the Iraq war has changed the scenario. The US is no longer dependent on Israel on any matter security, oil interest or otherwise. The US has sufficient forces in the area to control not only Middle East but also Central and South Asia.	Roomy New DOHS, Dhaka Converting Muslims to Christianity! I read with interest, and not a little winc- ing, the article of Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed, concerning the enthu- siastic American Evangelicals who see, in the 'conquests' (if that is the right word) of Afghanistan and Iraq an opportu- nity to convert Mus- lims to Christianity. However, it is sad to think of the ways in which such an article could 'wind up' some of your readers, sir. Resurrecting ancient,	any religion at all, but I do assure you that UK Christians have far more reason for concern about 'con- version' than Bangladeshi Mus- lims! Mind you, being tolerant Brits, most of us just sigh and say, "Good luck to them!" <b>Angela Robinson</b> (Rev Mrs) Lalmatia, Dhaka <b>"South Asian</b> <b>alliance"</b> I would like to thank Mr. Wahed for his thoughtful reply. It is indeed true, prob- lems are many and there is no magical solution to all these issues. However the impact of these problems could be contained through strong political will and with a series of	once Afghanista becomes stable too could be inco porated. A strom alliance betwee these countries wi act as a deterrent to the activities of BSI Also to counte the regional threat from India, Bangla desh and Pakista should governmen should actively wor to set up a Nava Base in Maldives to keep an eye on the growing might of Indian Navy. The effect of a this will be a mor humble India. Thi in turn will force them to change the big brotherly att tude to a more cor siderate one. Once this cor cept takes shape am sure all ou small neighbour
Road Map to nowhere?				hly dis pro por tio nat e s h are	our bit for Bangla- desh, with our Chris- tian 'label' showing, being considered deeply dangerous, needing to be care- fully watched and under threat of avico	calculated mea- sures. I would address some of his concerns below I would primarily focus my attention on Bangladesh. The model could also be then applied to all	will also try to emu late it which i return may act as blessing in disguis and be a boost fo SAARC itself. <b>K. Wasimuddin</b> <i>Chicago, USA</i>

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morning assembly

talks. Actually, I am

telling them about

Professor Yunus and

microcredit at the

## On Budget 2003-2004

The withdrawal of VAT on travel agencies has got nothing to do with boosting tourism in the country, not even in the slightest sense. If government thinks that it's just and proper to withdraw VAT on travel agencies, it has every right to do so; but it has got no scope to correlating, withdrawal of the said VAT with boosting of tourism in the country. It's a gross mistake to do so.

Yes, it will boost tourism in other countries in the expense of Bangladesh foreign exchequers, as Bangladeshis will now feel more tempted to fly abroad on tourism purpose. It may have some positive impacts on manpower business. Let's hope for the better.

Slashing of import duties on alcohol from 592.19 per cent to 430.25 per cent will have little impact on boosting tourism in Bangladesh. Foreign tourists do not come to this country to taste the taste of alcohol. In fact, their expenditure on drinking alcohol, while in Bangladesh, accounts for an insignificant part of their travelling budget. What concern them more, while taking decision, whether to visit or not to visit Bangladesh, are the existing exorbitant room tariffs at international standard hotels in this country.

Government tax plus service charge, in Bangladesh, on international standard hotels is to the tune of 42.5%. It is 15.5% in Malaysia, 21% in Thailand and 20% in India. The annual foreign exchange earning of Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and Thailand from their respective tourism sector are ten to forty folds more than the foreign exchange Bangladesh earns a year from the remittances sent by its expatriate workers.

Thanks a lot to our Finance Minister for at least mentioning the words 'boosting of tourism' in the budget. The very mentioning has broken the taboo on thinking as to the development of tourism on the part of our national policy makers. It's a good sign, and we hope that if government does not do some thing for the 'real' boosting of tourism in this country, through the ensuing amendments of the budget, before it (the budget) gets the thump up the National Assembly, the next year budget will certainly contain some good news for the sector.

## Faruque Hasan

Life in DU

Bangladesh and admitted into DU. It

India and to compen- is a dream of almost

I have just got

every student of

Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Most of the budget reaction appears as mindset remarks. Considering the resource constraint, limitation in our capacities and initiative, also the pressure groups, our government cannot make a budget of their own choice. One should appreciate the factors that influence a budget preparation. Every government tries to some extent to give it a proper shot.

\* \* \*

Calling the budget 'anti-people', discriminatory, poor bashing, does not sound thoughtful. Like in one daily put it on the following day of budget preparation, all the banners or placards to hail or reject the budget were made ready before its presentation. If you analyse the tone of the remarks or the sentences used by some political parties is the same as last year or even before 10 years. What can we call it, intellect or attitude!

If the projected growth rate of 5.5 can be achieved it will be an achievement over last budget, if it is implemented properly it could go up to 6% some one even projected.

ADP historically remains as under-utilised, what is being utilised also a big chunk of it drained as corruption and wastage. Education sector always enjoyed the biggest allocation but the dilapidated conditions and quality tells us something else. What we need most is discipline and some ethics.

## M M Haque

Jeddah, K.S.A

When I first saw the 100 per cent point reduction in the duty on alcohol, my first thought was that perhaps there is too large a black market currently and as a result to reduce the size of the black market and increase government revenues the government must have reduced the duty. But Mr. Finance Minister has come up with an unacceptable reason to reduce the duty, sighting the attempt to attract more tourists to the country by reducing the duties on alcohol.

\* \* \*

I am sorry to disagree with you Mr. Finance Minister but don't you think that tourists do not come to Bangladesh and stay in Dhaka because of the poor socio-economic situation, the deteriorating law and order situation, constant political bickering and the terribly high costs associated with spending time in Dhaka? And the high costs are not because of the costs of alcohol but because both Sonargaon and Sheraton Hotel do not use any local items in an attempt to reduce costs.

Sonargoan bring every single item listed in the F&B department from abroad, thus pushing up costs by at least 20%. I think improving the quality of the local commodities and thereby encouraging the big hotels to use these commodities would make it cheaper for tourists to stay in Bangladesh at the premium hotels at a much lower cost than anywhere in Nepal!



The much vaunted Road Map is leading nowhere; Aqaba summit (with much fanfare) of high rhetoric and a facade of photo-ops) soon lapsed into familiar pattern of targeted assassinations and counter violence. The stark lesson is that a peace process (Madrid, Oslo, Sharm el Sheikh) that barely concealed a surrender process cannot produce anything other than a failure.

This is amply seen in Israel's expanding settlements (to produce a de facto situation where illegal can be presented as being inalterable and so legal); protracted foot dragging on agreements and accords (with no intention to fulfil obligations); continuing occupation of Palestinian lands: violent suppression of resistance. Under cover of a "peace process". Israel has pushed a strategy of acquiring under duress Palestinian acquiescence to occupation, settlements, and expulsion - wrenching escalating concessions from the dispossessed.

The peace process has in effect become a protracted and tortuous exorcise in a futile bid to lend a perverted legitimacy to the Israeli strategy to get the victim's consent to torture and surrender of rights. To pretend surprise and shock at desperate acts (the so-called suicide bombings) fuelled by monumental anger and frustration is a kind of cynical hypocrisy. What has been lacking is not rhetoric but a genuine commitment to a just and fair deal on the part of the "peace brokers" led by the United States. What is astounding is that this charade of peace process has been allowed to go on for so long even allowing for the evolved fact that the closest supporters of Palestinian rights are so timid, divided, and selfish.

All parties have responsibility. Before the cycle of escalation hurtles towards a major catastrophe - a catastrophe that is eminently avoidable and should have been averted long ago-Israel must abandon its vision of Greater Israel meaning total capitulation of Palestinian aspiration, permanent expulsion of Palestinian population from their ancestral lands. Dr. Zakir Husain

Dhaka

Misuse of electricity

Since we are experieverywhere Apart from the encing paucity of open garbage, overelectric supply and loadsheding all over flowing drains and all the city it is nothing the other filth these but a mere joke to use posters contribute electricity in the shops heavily to the ugliness and newly conof our beloved city. Posters are somestructed multi-storey thing which I have building even during been seeing from the day time. This phetime I was born, but nomenon is sighted in recently the numbers Mohakhali Rupayan Centre. Misusing have risen at rapid rate. Advertisements electricity during day time should be propcan come in many

vying for a seat god

posters are literally

knows where! These

We all want to live in a ever actions he takes neat and clean enviare legal! ronment. And the first But there is one thing that needs to be exception the state of done is to get rid of Israel this ridiculous tradi-Not so long ago US tion. A "No Posters President gave the Allowed" sian wont Israeli PM a deadline do, the DCC should to pull out after an act strictly (Mr Mayor I illegal incursion into hope you are reading Palestinian territory this letter). It is a crime by the Israeli Army. to conquer other The Israeli PM simply people's walls. If this ignored the deadline isn't stopped our city with a mysterious will always be known smile. Presently, the as one of the dirtiest in US backed Roadthe world! Map for peace in Jeeshan Mirza Palestine is also

Bandladesh to get treatment of a moment...) smaller neighbour by himself/herself the I have to say that, admitted into DU US India, Bangladesh since being here, I should continue its The students who have mixed only with "Look East" foreign gets the chance are аb the sort of Christians policy more vigor- said to be the luckiout whose attitudes to ously. China is est and the most \$5 'conversion' are already our trusted meritorious. But the bill strictly correct. If life these meritorifriend and trading ion Muslims approach partner. More energy ous students lead any foreign Chrisshould be spent to after getting the y e tians. claiming that entrance into DU is improve our ties with they want to convert, Burma and other completely disap-Re they are usually ASEAN nations. A pointing. Most of por steered rapidly them like to waste ted highway could be towards the nearest their time in chatting Iу, built linking Bengali Christian Chittagong port in T.S.C rather than priest or minister who in concentrating in lar with the Southern will 'sort out' those and South Eastern their study or library g e who think that becomprovinces of China works. With a deep s e ing a Christian is a via Burma. This will sorrow I am observgm neat way of finding a ing some brilliant ent open up the "Eastjob or handouts, from ern trade route". fellow students' those who may be US negligence in study. This highway will aenuine inauirers. Because their is no allow us to import ро The latter are treated strict discipline or high quality Chipul extremely cautiously teachers which or nese goods and in ati and given a great deal turn China can use who will persuade o n of time and heavy Chittagong port to us in study like our qu doses of realism, in school or college. carry its goods to est order to test them. Is Beside this, there ion its southern provthis not the way in inces instead of are other factors. which Muslims treat Shanghai or Hong There is no control the those from the other Kong as the dis- of DU authority over s e religious communindi tance is lesser the students and as ties, who come to e t w e e n a result without any n g them, wanting to Chittagong and guidance some convert? southern Chinese students have cho-S 0 In fact, the rate of provinces than from sen smoking. And mu conversion to Islam in c h Shanghai or Hong the political parties the west is rapid. I mo Kong. This in turn are always trying to have not got the will boost trade collect more activn e statistics to hand, but I between Banglaists. Many of my know that the events desh, China and classmates have t o of September 11th Burma and ulti- been told that they s u 2001 resulted in a mately reduce our will not get a seat in сh spate of inquiries dependence on the the residential hall about Islam that were sm "Western route" until they work for a well handled and through India. particular party. all resulted in many The life of DU is As far as internal ро conversions. enjoyable, it has pul security is concern The Christian ation while so many Government should freedom. But could Research Association encourage the absolute freedom has calculated that, if less on some US youth to join Secu- bring any good to the decline in regular streets. But somerity forces in the us? church attendance country. The NSS strength of Bangla- Dhak how congress is continues at its curpersuaded to send Dhaka University rent rate and the rise more cash every desh Rifles, Police in regular mosque year. The Israeli PM, and Army should be attendance continues Mr. Sharon faces war increased drastiat its current rate, then crimes trial. But the cally the numbers will be US media are per-To counter what level by the year suaded not to make a BSF is doing now, I 2039! Not all conversincerely believe sions are from Chris-How are such there is great need tianity, of course, as persuasions possifor a strong military rather a lot of people ble? Why are the US co-operation

between Bangla-

desh, Pakistan and

small nations in

SAARC. To reduce

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Mohammad Arbaaz Nayeem

Mastermind School, Dhaka

Budget for the fiscal year 2003-04 has bewildered the common people of the country. Now it seems that bread is dearer than wine. I would like to ask our Honorable Finance Minister that how many people in our country, has the ability to drink or purchase diamonds. Sir I think you are forgetting that that Bangladesh is still an under developed country and many people starve the day without food.



A dramatic increase has been noticed on the duty of wide ranged everyday necessities. In these consequences it will be impossible for the middle and lower classes of the country to survive. As because there is increase on the revenues but the income of the masses are still unchanged and cannot adopt to these ascending changes. I think it will be wise for our Finance Ministry to answer in which direction our economy is heading for.

Our Finance Minister included in his speech that he has noticed a silent revolution in fields of fisheries and livestock. Though a revolution took place but fishes are out of imagination of a common man. He added there was a substantial increase on the production of milk, though an increase has been levied on the price of the commodity. Our Finance Ministry should take a closer look at the lives of the common people of the country and then should proceed with their present decision. I am afraid with the current budget many citizens of the country would be coined as financially unfit. Khalid Rahman Dhaka