

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.



PHOTO: AFP

Thanks to The Daily Star

The Mexican city of Cancun is now much talked about for its WTO summit. This summit is now a burning issue all over the world. We, the readers, whole-heartedly thank The Daily Star for the special pages on

Cancun summit. This was a tremendous job on the part of The Daily Star.
Saumitra Sarder Piklu
LLB final year, Jagannath Hall, DU

Magnetic train

I would like to respond to the letter published in The Daily Star, on September 13, 2003 headlined "A better option". In his letter Mr. Anis S Ahmad refers to "...I believe introduction of magnetic train can serve as an alternative in this regard, though surely a costly one."

He is correct to the extent that the Maglev Train can serve as an alternative, but I am afraid that he is wrong when he says that it is "surely a costly one". In fact, it is a very cheap rail system, costing around US\$10M per mile, which is a lot cheaper than other light rail systems even. Additionally, it is cheaper to operate and requires little maintenance as it has no wheels. With regard to Mr. Anis S Ahmad's suggestion for an underground system, I think that he will find that it cannot be a practical solution for Bangladesh and the cost would be higher than the cost of Maglev railway system.

Zabidur Rahman
Dhaka

Honorary trade advisors

Bangladesh missions abroad should step up their effort toward promoting export markets for Bangladeshi goods and services, hereinafter: product(s). In this

respect, it may be mentioned that the ministry of trade and commerce in collaboration with the ministry of foreign affairs have, in recent months, taken a series of measures to bring about a positive change in the country's trade promotion activities.

As per the Bangladeshi dailies: the trade related targets have been established at the mission level; and the mission performances in pertinent areas are being monitored periodically against those targets. The government has so far, as I can remember now, shared at least once with the people of Bangladesh (through the mass media) the information pertaining to Bangladesh missions' trade related outcomes. It is an encouraging move.

But Bangladesh needs to do more to improve its export volume and trade related transactions. For strengthening its trade diplomacy in the pursuit of a more aggressive and result-oriented trade outcome, the country would require to establish functional outlets and promote a world-wide network of honorary trade advisors. The advisors will be responsible, *inter alia*, for identifying, capturing and expanding markets for Bangladeshi products in their respective countries and provide necessary support for the materialisation of export deals.

For their services, the advisors should be able to share (per deal) an

agreed percentage from the first payment to be made by importer(s) of Bangladeshi products. The advisors may be selected from institutions, such as, chambers of commerce and industry in their respective countries. They should work closely either with the Bangladesh missions in their countries or with the ministry of trade and commerce and the ministry of overseas employment (for service related exports) of Bangladesh, where there are no Bangladesh missions. A successful outcome of the trade advisers' network could, in the future, eliminate the need for maintaining trade counsellors in Bangladesh missions abroad. Further, a windfall from the network's success could brighten the prospect for FDI in the country.

It is expected that with the advancement of privatisation in the country and further development of the country's chambers of commerce and industry, more reliable and dependable national trade support management entities must be created.

Dr. MS Haq
New York

Rafiq, take a bow

Dav whatmore has termed it to be stupid, after Rashid Latif literally cheated to get rid of Alok Kapali. Rafiq did not run Omar Gul out having caught him out of crease. I

don't know how many Bangladeshi cricket fans agree with me, but to be honest, my heart swelled up watching this extreme display of generosity. I was very pleased and proud to be a Bangladeshi when I saw that scene on the TV screen.

Despite the dreams of millions of fans back home who were eagerly waiting for history to unfold; despite the enormous pressure of the match; Rafiq did not lose his sportsmanship. He kept all the emotions aside and exhibited something which was really extraordinary.

It may not be true for Pakistan, but after all, cricket is a game of gentlemen. May be we lost the match. We could not win today, but surely we shall win tomorrow, if not day after tomorrow.

But what Rafiq did stands above everything. If this is the attitude of our cricketers and if only for this reason we have to wait for more 24 tests to listen to the trumpets of our first ever Test victory.... promise, I shall have no complain.

Md bashar farhad
Mirpur, dhaka

PROMOTE Upazila Women Teachers Hostel!

PROMOTE has created a great opportunity for female teachers who are willing to work in rural schools. It has built hostels in Bagmara, Tanore, Puthia, Godagari in Rajshahi and Lalpur, Singra in Natore districts. These hostels are safe, decent and cheaper for women teachers. But no hostels in Joypurhat district. I would like to draw the attention of the concern people to build PROMOTE hostels in Joypurhat district too.

Mawduda
Joypurhat

No 'rocket science'

A news item was published in the local dailies that an agreement has been signed by the Secretary of communication with a Chinese company for construction of three bus terminal financed by the World Bank. We have unemployed youth; engineering graduates roaming the streets for jobs and the government decides to give the construction job of bus terminal to a foreign company.

Our engineering community sits in silence. Notwithstanding how skilled these Chinese labour are, Korean and many other companies are even allowed to bring non-skilled labour for the job. The government's excuse, no doubt will be that since World Bank is financing they do not have any other option but to follow the procurement guidelines. Yes, because the terms are so specifically made as to preclude local companies. Constructing a bus terminal is no rocket science and what is the sense of a designer bus terminal in a poor country like ours? And why do you need foreign exchange financing for construction of a bus terminal?

JAhmed
One-mail

Is America doing wrong?

I want to tell something about the article "Sharon and September 11" which was published in "The Daily Star" on previous Friday and was written by Muslehuddin Ahmad. After reading his article, I conclude that he didn't write this article from his objective perspective. He blamed Israel for September 11 incident.

According to his writing, Americans don't take action although they know Israel is guilty. But my question is - "How does Muslehuddin Ahmad think that after knowing this matter USA will not take any action against Israel." Can anyone believe that? My opinion is - America would take action against Israel if it was found guilty.

Now USA is the only superpower in the world. She is ready to do everything to protect her people. The US found the terrorists who were behind the September 11 incident and that is why they took action against them. I admit that Israel is doing wrong to the Palestinians. But why does someone accuse a country without knowing properly the incidents?

Aroop
Dhaka

OIC must do something

Finally the cat is out of the bag. The suicide or murder of British weapons expert Dr. Kelly and the subsequent hearings at the Hutton Commission at London's Royal court has proved beyond any doubt that Iraq did not possess any WMD as was stated much earlier by Dr. Blix, chief weapons inspector at the UN. The Hutton Commission has confirmed that the whole Iraq WMD issue was cooked up by Bush and Blair only to occupy Iraq and take control of Iraqi oil. By occupying Iraq, the Brits and the Americans have made the whole region unstable. After the failed Somali adventure, the Americans attacked Afghanistan and occupied it. Now it is Iraq. Before that it was Libya.

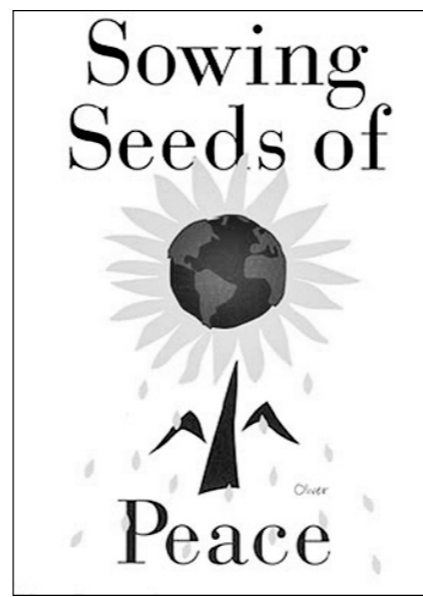
Not surprisingly Bush is even threatening Iran. There is an emerging pattern whereby the

Private university: Our attitude must change

This letter is in reply to the letters that appeared in this page regarding different aspects of private universities. For the last few weeks, debates have been going on private universities. There's lots of complains about the campuses, teachers, quality of education, etc.

As I am studying in one of the prestigious private engineering universities, so I've some points to clarify. All the teachers of private universities are highly qualified. And they never are one minute late to attend their classes. They give full attention to every student so the students can't go without studying the courses properly. Examinations are taken in so strict a manner that there's no way out to produce anything illegal. The students have the highest facility of computer labs, networking, library etc. in all of these universities.

In quest of a nuclear-free world



The history of enriching the efficacy of atomic bombs is very old and still, this endeavour continues. What once upon a time had been recognised as one of the most coveted inventions of science is now being treated as most heinous scientific contribution to our modern civilisation. The destructive strength of nuclear weapons has left its evidence of destruction from Hiroshima to Baghdad.

When such destructive scientific production falls into the hands of the crooked and notorious men and most importantly, when the petty interest comes to the fore forgetting the moral and ethical principle, then how much evil and destruction the scientific contributions could bring? Now, big nuclear powers of the world threaten the small countries to teach a lesson if they endeavour to operate any programme relating to nuclear development without letting them know of it. As a result, The people of the country under threat start doddering in fear of being attacked. We have witnessed this in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Attempt to enriching and developing the atomic research project and making more and more developed weapons has gained extra importance by some countries. The reasons are:
1) to establish regional dominance
2) to enter into prestigious club of atomic-capable nations.
3) to boom the economy by the silencing of nuclear weapons
4) to gain extra status from America and Britain
5) to save from being attacked by the most probable enemy country or countries.

Some big countries are encouraging to develop this programme eyeing on the vision of getting maximum benefit from science. But still their intention and

motive are not clear enough to omit them of the list of reasons. The change of style, strategy and structure of world political order has massively contributed to provide necessary impetus to the probable atomic nations to go ahead with such destructive projects.

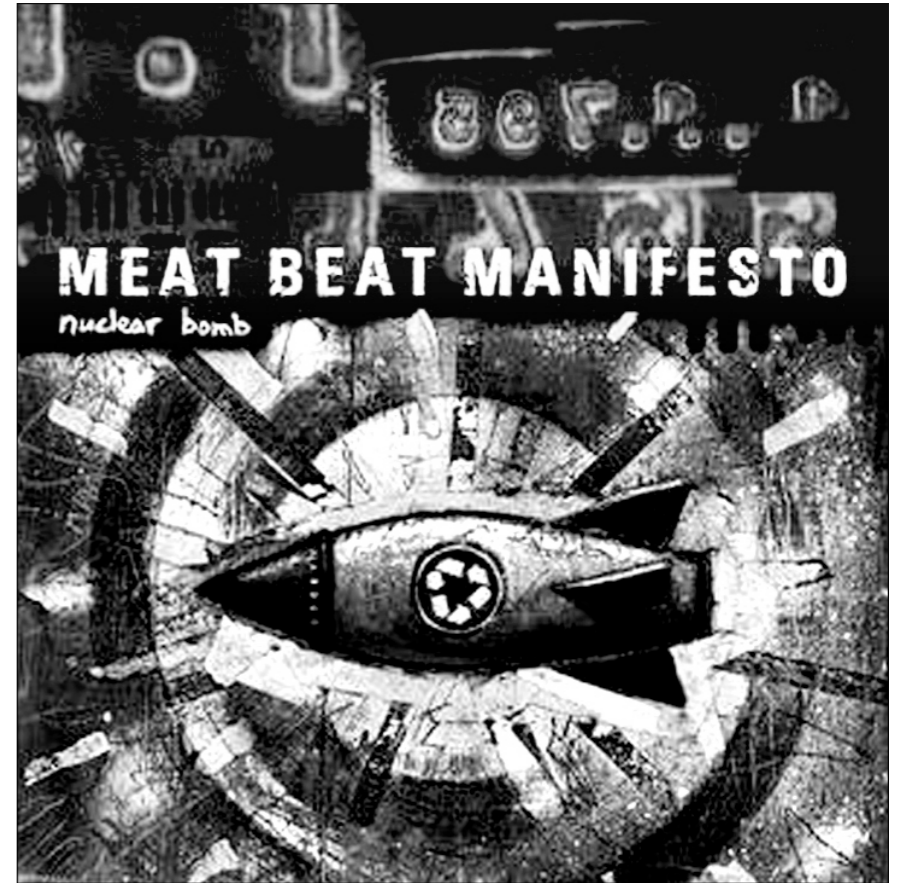
Inventions of fission bombs, ballistic missiles, hydrogen bombs, fighter jets are no doubt great achievements of science, but problem arises when these destructive forces are used to do harm to the humankind and the humanity and the oath for the effective and benevolent use of these scientific brilliance is destroyed.

To date, how many people across the globe have been killed, injured and disfigured from the imprudent utilisation of nuclear weapons remains uncounted. But the figure would be so large that the humanity has to bow down in shame.

to chalk up its functions, policies and strategies. But, most of the countries in the world are now scared of the ire of USA. When the leaders of USA say, "if you aren't with us, you are against us, we can understand how USA itself becomes a big threat to world peace.

We never want war, we just want peace and tranquillity. We want every country should be given the right to make its strategy. No bullying, no coercion. If USA wants peace to be initiated around the world, then they have to come forward to dispose off their destructive nuclear weapons first, otherwise their promises to make the world peaceful will sound hoarse. And to even out with USA, other countries will be engaging in nuclear programme more and more.

The simplest solution to this problem is the cancellation of all nuclear



Never did anybody in the world get relieved by the news of the development of destructive atomic weapons until zingoistic zealotry began to surface in people's minds.

It has given nothing but terror, destruction and consternation in people. So why then should we have to make nuclear weapons?

Almost every country in the world is being ruled under the theory of democracy. A sovereign country has every right

programmes, though the power hunger of the big countries would not lead us down that way. But, still we want peace. No more war, no more making and use of nuclear weapons.

Let's make the world happy and prosperous by getting rid of all nuclear programmes and weapons.

Sulav Barua
Criminal Justice and Criminology
Middlesex University, London, UK



PHOTO: AFP

Hand in hand for humanity

Community cohesion is a must for a healthy and progressive civil society. Cohesion means sticking together to remain united.

Some cynics may say it is not achievable, so why discuss it. It is not true. Sticking together and remaining united does not mean that there is no room for differences. Every healthy society should be based upon some solid grounds, which can enrich the society and help its growth and not that all are dissolved into an imaginary solution of cohesion.

Even in families and small groups there are bound to be differences, but there are certain rules of living together in a bond of friendship and sacrifice.

Multi-faith societies, as we have in Britain and elsewhere in Europe, North America and South East Asia, provide a unique opportunity for many faiths, traditions and cultures living together and each contributing to the healthy growth of their beautiful land to enrich God's creation. And it is in His infinite Wisdom that there are differences and variations.

Naturally the differences in religion and cultural practices are there, but if we go deep down into them we will be able to find a common thread and shared values which are the essence of a civil society. With the

philosophy of sharing and caring for all, we can form permanent and abiding principles of community cohesion.

I, as a Muslim, believe in the oneness of Humankind and the fact that we are all divided into clans, tribes and regions, colour and languages are according to a divine plan and not through our own designs. And according to the Quran, these are to know each other, get acquainted and share and care together the bounties of God.

We have our differences but that does not prohibit us in contributing to the well being of our family or the organisation of which we are a member. The best among us are only those who are the one who care, share and contribute to the growth and well being of the society where every one can live by his or her tradition of faith but does not trespass on others'.

Such are those who work for the common good, justice, equality, without discrimination, upholding the fundamental human rights as is enjoined by all religions and all decent people around the world.

We must come forward and invite all to uphold the shared values on which real and lasting cohesion can be built.

Syed Faiyazuddin Ahmad
Leicester, UK

On resolving DCC's development mystery



A few days back I went to the airport and was shocked to see that the rather well-constructed road divider on the airport road was being demolished, starting from the airport-end and also near the Banani gate. The same thing has happened to the divider near the Malibagh crossing. These concrete dividers must have cost the DCC quite a lot of money no doubt! This type of dividers also act as a deterrent to the random crossing of roads by the pedestrians which is necessary for smooth flow of traffic.

Apart from these, many old road dividers have already been destroyed or are being destroyed and reconstructed again! It leads one to think that, perhaps, DCC is now awash with a lot of cash and does not know how to put it to good use!

But that can hardly be the truth. There are innumerable roads, lanes etc. and also sidewalks in this very city which desperately need repairs and reconstruction.

Why the DCC authorities are not paying attention to those roads/lanes is hard to understand. Hopefully the concerned authorities in the government would look into this urgently.

Abul Mohsin
Sidheswari Circular Road,
Dhaka

PHOTO: STAR