

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.

The role of opposition leader



In a mammoth public meeting after the long march, opposition leader Sheikh Hasina spoke and the whole country listened. I did too. Through your newspaper I would like to ask her a few questions related to her speech and may I request her to reply.

the proposals for reforms in the caretaker government and election system. This is an encouraging spirit, which we all wanted her to show a long time back. My question to her is, why couldn't she show it earlier? "But if the government refuses to carry out the proposals in the letter, we will resign all together." Is this a responsible statement? This means that she does not believe in any parliamentary debate or arguments on her proposals. Then why does she not just send her proposals by a courier service? "Hasina called on the administra-

tion, police, Rab, and others to dissociate themselves from the 'failed and terrorist government.'" Again this is unfortunately a very senseless and cheap statement. If Rab, police and all other administrative personnel do not follow the orders then does she understand that even her own security will also be gone? Finally, "Hasina called for a nationwide hartal on February 15 demanding from the government uninterrupted

power supply and reduction of the prices of fertiliser and fuel." Can she face the reality that her senseless hartal will not produce one kw of extra electricity? Does she do the math on how much the country loses for her senseless hartal? Does she have any feeling for the poor people who starve because they cannot earn their wages on the day of hartal? Aziz Ahmad, Ph. D., P.E. New Eskaton Road, Dhaka



DS 15th anniversary

As I was stooping to pick my Daily Star on 5, 2006, I stopped surprised at the headline. Dr. Yunus predicted country's rosy future. That is very nice but since when such a speech started to make six-column lead news? The puzzle became clear as I read small letters. It was The Daily Star anniversary he gave the speech in. This came on a day when hundreds of thousands of opposition supporters gathered on the outskirts of Dhaka to march in with their demands, to prevent them the government has resorted to Stalinist method of blanket arrest with minimum quota, Iran situation is coming to a head, Muslim world is swell-

ing in protest over the cartoon controversy. This news deserves to be heard more loudly. Let's not misunderstand: we love The Daily Star and its gala event is a good reading. Dr. Yunus is a pride of Bangladesh, and his guidance is valuable. His words are more genuine and sincere because his patriotism doesn't have 5-year shelf life like politicians'. But important news is not necessarily made by worthy people, and the newspaper's own anniversary is not the material to make six-column top of the front-page news. Ashish Ahsan, Uttara, Dhaka

Ti reports

A few years back I subscribed for lifetime membership of TI Bangladesh. I was receiving monthly E-bulletins and Newsletter (by post). Through the bulletins all I have observed or understood is TI only engaged in a few seminars and some field works around a particular locality besides their yearly declaration of Corruption Perception Index rating and 'crowning' Bangladesh.

corrupt and down that it will take years for the rot to heal even if we try hard. Foreign money can direct an economist or political scientist to behave. They organise seminars, symposiums, workshops until the money lasts. If that led you to believe that they are working for people, please think again. If corruption checker (TI) behaves the way they do, what impression you get? If the civil society brings down our civility and works to dampen our values, what remains? In 35 years only 1.3 million middle class has been created, who have amassed their wealth in the last few years, and have no sense of direction. They behave like strange creatures, service and trade getting the lead, because manufacturing requires hard work and ingenuity. Except this meager strange population the whole nation seems content and happily endeavoring to rise, what provides the impetus to the bearing soul of this nation? Please keep your hope alive and do your part. MM Haque Jeddah, K.S.A

Where killers go unpunished In the world history one cannot find any instance like Bangladesh for which millions of people had sacrificed their lives and thousands of women had been raped. The killers-Pakistani army and the local collaborators, Jamaat and so called some smaller Islamic parties escaped punishment for

war crime due to international and national politics. On August 15, 1975 we lost our supreme leader Bangabandhu along with his family members. The verdict still hangs in the court. After the assassination of Bangabandhu and four national leaders in the jail, successive military rulers gave shelter to the killers at home and abroad. On 30 May, 1981, President Ziaur Rahman was killed in a failed coup but the killers were hanged later. General HM Ershad seized power overthrowing the Sattar government in a bloodless coup. But political killings continue in the country and the killers are not being brought to justice. Mallik Akram Hossain The University of Hong Kong

PSC

The Bangladesh Public Service Commission (PSC) is a quasi-judicial body established under the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. It works under the provisions of the Articles 137 to 140 of the Constitution and certain other rules and regulations made by the Govt. from time to time under the Constitution. Quota distribution (for both cadre and non cadre posts) merit 45%, district 55% which includes freedom fighters/ freedom fighters' daughters/sons 30%, female 10% tribal 5%, general 10%. I think every graduate student knows the quota distribution system. So, why am I bothering about this? I ask myself. But like so many BCS job dreamers who are going to sit for the written test I cannot convince myself rather confuse myself and blame by

family and my fate that I was not born in these privileged families for example, freedom fighters' families. Why? Because, I would get a cadre by getting minimum pass marks that is, by getting only 45% marks. We know the quota, which is given to freedom fighters' families, is not being filled up because of the lack of qualified candidates obtaining minimum pass marks. But student in the merit quota cannot make sure their places even after getting 55% marks in the written test. I am not denying the great legacy of our freedom fighters, but what I am trying to say is that by providing quota to the offspring of our great real freedom fighters, our freedom fighters are being embarrassed. Because they didn't liberate the country for the mercy or pity which would be shown to their daughters and sons. They were real fighters and they would believe that in the battlefield of meritocracy their children would also win their places. Does not a freedom fighter get embarrassed when his or her daughter or son gets mistreatment and taunting remarks from the viva board members? For example, one viva board member asked one of the freedom fighter's sons whose viva he would take. "Would you get the job on your own qualification? It is your father's legacy for whom you are here, so, I am taking your father's viva." So it is up to the authorities to take this controversial quota system under scrutiny so that the meritocracy can get front position. We appreciate the new exam system but we are dismayed by the unequal quota system, which has no valid

ground. In addition to this, the debate about fake or real freedom fighters is continuing. One of my friends asked me how many years and how many generations would get this privilege? It has been 35 years since we got liberty but, why the age of the freedom fighters has been relaxed to 32 years instead of 30 years? I was not able to answer my friend. Who can answer him? Md. Harisur Rahman JU

Captive freedom in US

Shindi Shihan, anti war worker in the US who lost her son in Iraq, was arrested recently before the speeches of the State of the Union. She went to the function wearing a shirt painting "the number of murder 2245." According to her view the police officer that arrested her, termed her as "protester" as if it is a crime to protest. While she was walking in front of the police officer opening the jacket due to warm atmosphere, he swooped on her to arrest. When she asked him about his rude attitude to her, he replied, "as you protested". (The daily Prothom Alo, February 5, 2006.)

What is the implication of freedom of speech in the US? If Shindi is persecuted for showing the message 2245, where is freedom? She was treated illegally and brutally due to her protest. According to her writing which was published (the translated version) in the daily Prothom Alo, there is no freedom of wearing dress i.e. personal freedom, freedom of speech as it is not allowed to say anything

against the government over telephone (as there is tele tapping) in the US.

So this is the intellectual poverty of US political system as they are torturing Shindi physically rather than going for discussion with her. The US has become bankrupt morally and intellectually in not only its own territory but also in Iraq and other places, as they are torturing people inhumanely in Abu Graib and Guantanamo Bay. This is the sign of declining trend of western civilisation. Taslim Hasan Sabu University of Dhaka

Traffic Congestion

Traffic congestion remains a global problem in both developed and underdeveloped countries. Here in Dhaka, the intolerable traffic congestion has become an everyday certainty and nightmare for city dwellers. It can be easily concluded that Dhaka has marched into the 21st century as an over-populated, over-congested and an over-polluted city. Traffic poses a negative externality upon the society. It is a social cost that every one of us has to incur. It also poses a severe threat to the economy as well as the environment. Since Dhaka city has more vehicles than any other place in the country, most of this congestion occurs in Dhaka. It is very hard to tell the exact reason for congestion in this city as it does not follow any pattern. It is common practice in Dhaka to blame the rickshaw-pullers as the sole reason for traffic jam in the streets. But in reality there

are many other reasons for this traffic congestion. The reasons include: significant increase in pollution and all types of vehicle, traffic mismanagement i.e. violation of traffic rules and regulations, poor transportation and infrastructure planning i.e. the unplanned growth of the city. It can be also due to political reasons as every day at least one or two street processions or protests occur in Dhaka because of the all-time political instability of Bangladesh. These processions slow down the traffic flow of the important streets during the peak hours. Although the problem of traffic congestion is universal, its solution is not easy. What is applicable or what should be applicable in Europe or the US might not be applicable to every country of Asia. As for Bangladesh, we cannot go for remedies like the US or Europe because of our technical or technological deficiency. Therefore I really hope that something is done about the traffic congestion in Dhaka city, not only for the country but also for the people. Labiba Rahman Dilu Road, Maghbazar

ment on many flashy subjects, namely fashion, interior decoration etc. To you these are more important than "Science and Technology". This has saddened me a lot. Actually yours and all most all of the national dailies have no full-fledged, complete science page. In almost all dailies, there are pages on science and/or technology, particularly information technology that can be seen as extension of literature pages as they publish popular articles on recent development in the field of IT, medicine, agriculture and translation of such popular articles. But to develop Science and Technology of our country, we need regular column in the dailies discussing the activities, policy of the science ministry, performance and problems of different research organisations, suggesting mechanisms for improvement in Science and Technology in our country etc. To meet the ever-increasing demand of food, feed, fuel and other fundamental needs in this small land of 140 million people, there is no alternative to improvement in the field of Science and Technology. You certainly understand the importance of advancement in Science and Technology for our national progress. But permit me to say that you are not paying due attention to the matter. Monir Uddin Ahmed Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission, Dhaka

Science and Technology

It is my pleasure as a regular reader for more than three years to congratulate you and the journalists of the Daily Star on its 15th anniversary. But as a young scientific officer, we, particularly I, are disappointed seeing no supplement on "Science and Technology" in the list of supplements in the anniversary issues. You are publishing supple-

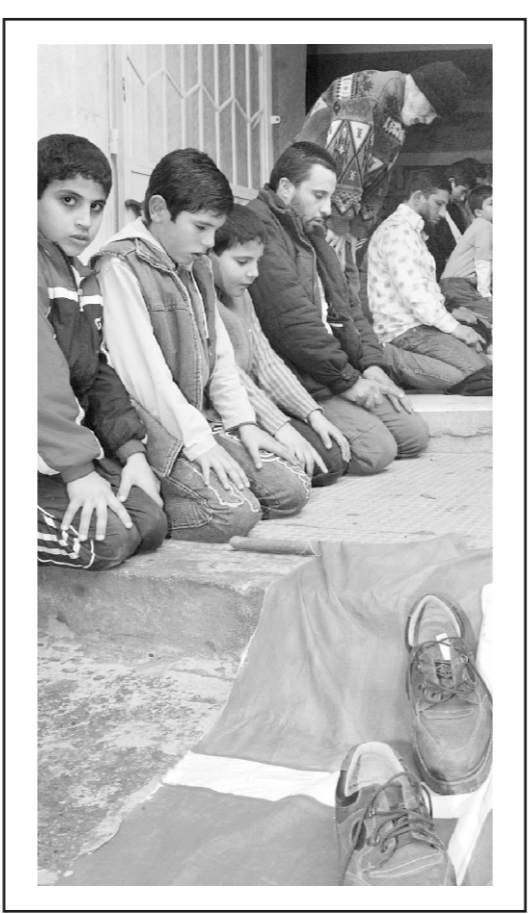
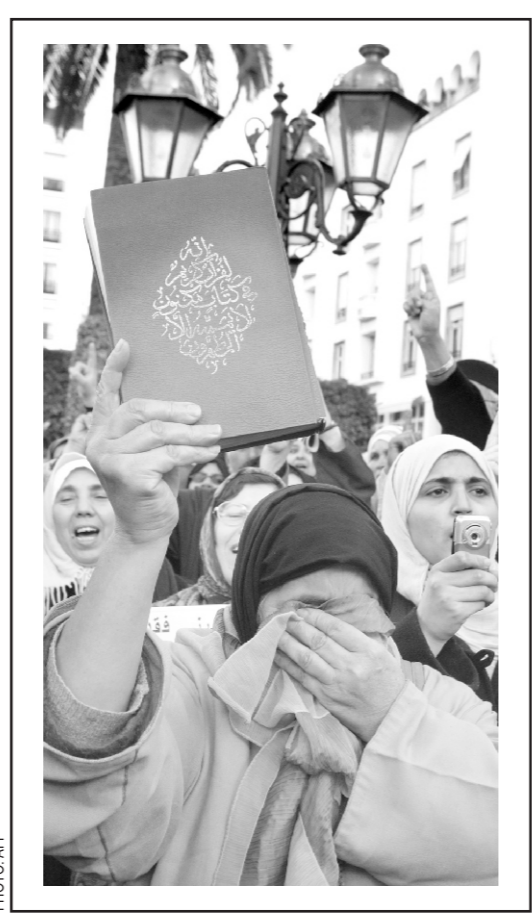
Cartoon controversy

I would like express my feelings about the issues surrounding Prophet Mohammed's (Pbuh) cartoon in a Danish newspaper.

Muslims emphasise on the fact that their religion had not been changed and their script is God's true revelation to the mankind, everything that they do, their customs and rituals cannot be questioned. However, there is perhaps no point in bothering too much about what others are saying. Anonymous UK

kept out of controversy or ridicule. All the prophets Christ, Moses, Abraham, and great men like Gautam Buddha, Ram and Krishna should not be subjected to profanation. They are to be kept out of the purview of over-zealous journalists. There ought to be a rational and pragmatic limitation of freedom of press and ideas. It should be enjoyed with more responsibility. SN Mamoon Dhaka

The letters under "Freedom of Virulent Speech" suggest that Denmark mend the damage done...sooner the better. There are many kinds of terror, these are all illegitimate. Good manners are important. (It was George Bernard Shaw who said that without good manners human society is impossible). Another view expressed is that, it is not enough to protest. It must be backed by action---to boycott



all Danish and French goods together with unconditional apology. And for hurting the feelings of other nations due price must be paid. There should be registration of strong protest against this attack. Farida S On e-mail

The Gyllands Posten, the Danish newspaper, recently published the cartoon of the Prophet of Islam Hazrat Mohammad (Pbuh). As a result, all over the world religious Muslims are getting agitated and have burnt embassies and their flags. According to the principle of the Islam, any kind of cartoon, photograph or painting of the prophet is strictly forbidden. On the other hand, according to the ethics of journalism, journalists don't attack any religious feelings, holy books, prophet or pioneer of any religion. I have watched the odd cartoon on that magazine

on e-mail. This kind of virulent practice will hamper communal peace, religious feelings and intra-religious relation as we noticed and are noticing presently. We, the civil society members all over the world, are trying to make a peaceful and better world. It can be said that 'Civil Society is the sleeping lion of the society'. MAH Nazim DU

Of course the publication of the cartoons was wrong and insensitive. The majority of the Muslims protested peacefully, like for instance the Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, while protesting against the publication of the cartoons also congratulated the British press for not publishing the cartoons. To those Muslims who reacted violently, I would like to draw their attention to the experience of the Prophet (Pbuh) when he was abused

during his visit to Taif. In response to the abuses Allah sent an angel to the Prophet (Pbuh) who said to him: "O, Prophet of Allah! I am at your service. If you wish, I can cause the mountains overlooking this town on both sides to collide with each other, so that all the people therein would be crushed to death, or you may suggest any other punishment for them."

The merciful and noble Prophet (Pbuh) however replied: "Even if these people do not accept Islam, I do hope from Allah that there will be persons from among their progeny who would worship Allah and serve His cause." Consequently, I beg the Muslims of today to reflect. Instead of violent protests causing damage to diplomatic missions we should react with dignity as the Prophet did. Rafiq A. Tschannen Amman, Jordan