Reforms

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.

Biman in bad shape



Your front-page news item (18 Feb) under the above heading is very disturbing and sad news for a national flag carrier.

As far as I remember since 1976 Biman has been a target of manipulation and interference by all governments that came to power. Since commencement of Hajj flights last December, Biman landed in a quagmire. Now the aircrafts are getting grounded one after another. Sometimes I wonder whether the Biman's Hajj flights were intentionally disorganised to make way for air charter companies who eventually seem to have won. The present situation of grounded aircrafts, delays and confusion at Biman departure counters at home and abroad appear very suspicious too. I hope Biman is not heading for a situation where its aircrafts would be grounded by court orders at overseas airports due to non payment of dues like landing and airport charges, hotel bills, interline payments, etc. Are all these being done intentionally to make way for a private airline? Or, is it sheer inefficiency?

The matter needs an in-depth investigation. Ziauddin Ahmed On e-mail

Bishwa Ijtema: alternative site

I very much appreciate the opinion expressed by Air Cdre Ishfaq Ilahi Chowdhury on Feb 08 in your daily regarding shifting of the present litema site from the bank of river Turag in Tongi to either side of Jamuna Bridge approaches. In fact this sort of forward looking proposal having far reaching effects on the country's good name and image should have been forwarded by the government or the Tablig elders. I fully agree with the remarks that responsibility for the smooth conduct of the Bishwa litema should the added responsibility of the government (Ministry of Religious Affairs) and it should oversee and extend all cooperation to the Tablig elders arranging this auspicious

gathering every year. The number of participants in Bishwa litema is increasing every year and as reported it is going to cross 3 million soon. It is the second largest congregation of the Muslims and devotees from most of the Muslim countries are visiting Bangladesh in greater numbers. It is a good sign and the government extends all possible facilities to the devotees from the country and abroad not only to earn good name but also to show to the world that we may be poor but hospitable, religious minded but not fanatic.

The present location is valuable and the prime land is very much within the Dhaka Metropolitan city area. This land should be better utilised to attain economic benefit or social uplift through education and training by setting up more industries or schools/colleges/technical institutes. This is just sheer wastage to keep this land unutilised for the whole year except three days, whereas suitable land

for setting EPZ or any other institu-

tion around the capital city is not

available Alternately, the government can also study the feasibility of shifting the Bishwa Ijtema site to Sholakia in Kishoregoni where the largest Eid Congregation is held every year.

Killing of teachers

I think nobody will overlook the consequences of the nasty student and teacher politics in the public universities. Over the decades public universities have experienced innumerable bloody clashes between rival student organisations to gain supremacy on the campus. leaving many students dead.

Central political parties as well as teacher politics have shaped student politics leading to violence. Political leaders have close nexus with teachers and vice-versa for their mutual benefits. Removal of elected VCs and appointing VCs loyal to the ruling party have been the practice in public universities. The activities of VCs elected or selected, whatever might be the case, are influenced by party interests. This nasty politics helps some teachers as well as officials to get promotion without fulfilling the necessary criteria. Even in evaluating exam papers of the students, teachers favour their political fol-

There are many instances of this kind of malpractice, which have ruined the public universities'

One of the most serious consequences of politics has been the assassination of our teachers who opposed all sorts of illegal practices. We have lost Prof.

Humayun Azad, Prof. Yunus

and lastly Prof. Taher has been added to list

We may think of overhauling the

1973 University Act. Mallik Akram Hossain The University of Hong Kong Hong Kong

TO THE

Be compassionate

In recent years, mother's day, father's day, Valentine's day etc. have been introduced only to serve the interests of companies which sell greeting cards. In US, older parents tend to live in housing facilities meant for senior citizens and most often have to tend for themselves. Probably no purpose is served, when old parents are felicitated once a year

In order to show respect and love for the dear ones, we need to show compassion throughout the year. Michael Smith, US

An abrupt end

The dream has been shattered, the enthusiasm has died. The dream run of the Bangladesh under-19 cricket team had an abrupt end. The early exit from the quarter finals was quite unexpected. It was more woeful because the team lost to England who had lost all the matches against Bangladesh a couple of months ago. The team's performance in the recent past made them one of the favourites. The favourites don't win all the time. But it's not solace me.

Batting is the strongest department of the team but the batsmen failed miserably. Though the team won all the three group matches convincingly but the batting didn't click. In every match there was an early hiccup in the top order, even they were all out against Uganda. Only the middle & lower order saved the top order from blushes but when they failed against England the match slipped from our

Over confidence was one of the main reasons for the failure. It is true for every team in every sport. The notable example was the failure of France & Argentina in the 2002 World Cup football.

Though there was no selection debate & no one questioned the selection, I couldn't understand why an all-rounder like Marshal Ayub was out of the team. He proved the selectors wrong in the just concluded Dhaka Premier League with some scintillating

The early exit from the World Cup is not the end of the world. The players will soon represent Bangladesh. So we must nurture them carefully

Solaiman Palash East Jurain, Dhaka

Weather forecast by TV stations

find that except BTV other TV channels in Bangladesh do not

"Weather Forecast" for the benefit of their viewers. The weather forecast is very important for office goers, students, farmers, business people and travellers.

With proper information of "weather" everyone can plan their work schedule in advance. This will save lot of time and make people more efficient.

It may be noted that BBC gives

the world news every hour and weather forecast of the major cities of the world at regular intervals.

letters@thedailystar.ne

We should move with the times and introduce new programmes for the benefit of the people. I. Haq

Dealing with corruption

On e-mail

After being five times champions in corruption according to TIB reports, we have seen a number of dialogues, seminars or discussions throughout this country. An interesting article by Dr. Md. Yunus about corruption was published in a Bengali newspaper which was appreciated by most of the readers. BBC has done a great job by conducting programmes like "Bangladesh Songlap" where most burning issues including corruption in our country have been discussed. Our respectable political leaders attended these dialogues and expressed their utmost commitment to eradicating these problems. We are very familiar with their worthless speech (may be this is the only thing they can do in a better way) and if we want to cite an example of their contribution to our country we can talk about the newly formed Anti Corruption Commission(ACC). We know there have been a lot of controversies regarding various issues of ACC since the first day of its operation. But the most frustrating thing is that this commission has not done any significant work till now. So it is very obvious that we cannot expect good things from this institution. We should move forward through our own way. This is high time to do something different. We don't need any more dialogues. We have the outcome of dialogues like what we should do and what we should not. Now it is time to apply these things in practice. Let us come under one platform with only one vision. We should make a functional move towards eradication of corruption from our country

Let us not forget our fight to establish Bengali as mother tongue in 1952 and to win independence in 1971. We need another FIGHT against corruption.

Miraz Ahmed Dhaka University

"Bhalobasha Dibosh"

Valentine's Day, a festival of love, has been celebrated in Bangladesh almost every year with high fervour following other cultures. In the name of the Valentine's Day what happens in the big hotels and restaurant is really ridiculous. Sometimes we see couples become violent and do some odd things which do not go with our culture. As it is not our culture so it should be launched in a different way with the name "Bhalobasha Dibosh". And we should view the day in light of our own culture.

Arif Laskar Jahangirnagar University

Biharis' plight

It is really a pity that when the Election Commission has very rightly, following the relevant High Court decision, taken up the task of enlisting the so-called BIHARIS in the 2006 voters list, one Dhaka daily

the advice of the government duly approved by the parliament. Mere showing of hands should not be used to approve or reject a candidate but a properly constituted parliamentary committee should interview the incumbent and submit their findings to the parliament for their final vetting.

For some time now one of the major politi-

cal parties has been agitating for reforms

in the Election Commission and caretaker

government i.e. they are only concerned

about those matters that directly affect

their chances of getting elected and no

other anomaly draws their attention. It

does not reflect the aspiration of the vast

citizen of this impoverished country and

would like to suggest the following

including that of the head of the caretaker

government be made by the president on

I am a conscientious and responsible

Appointment to all constitutional posts

majority of our population.

reforms

I feel that our parliamentary system also needs a major shake-up. Westminister style parliamentary democracy suits a developed and civil society and not a poor, illiterate and economically backward country such as ours. In our country, people generally vote for party and very seldom they vote for individuals. Let's take the example of Dr. Kamal Hussain, any parliament will be proud to have him among their midst as he is a highly respected politician but without the backing of a major political party he cannot even get elected. So we choose party and not individual.

I, therefore, suggest that instead of having a demarcated constituency we should have five parliamentary seats for every district. Each political party should select five candidates after conducting a primary election by party's registered members and then serialize them on the basis of most votes cast in favour of candidates. The voters will vote for political party and its symbol and for every 1/5th votes cast in favour of a party, it will get one seat in the parliament. Besides being members of the parliament these elected MPs will also function as members of district development council and will oversee all development work of the district in association with the members of the existing elected members of the local government. Function of the development council will be supportive and it will act as facilitator to the local governments to expedite development work. This way the elected MPs, besides enacting laws, will also be associated with local development work which the voters of the district expect from their elected representatives.. This system I am sure will address many of the ills that plague our politics.

Above is an outline of my thoughts and ideas. I would request readers of DS to elaborate on this and give their views so that we can have a better political environment.

Salahuddin Ayubi Dhanmondi, Dhaka

We congratulate the opposition leader for joining parliament to place reform proposal for caretaker government and electoral system. We, the common people, start understanding the necessity of the reform seeing the political situation turning violent. The CEC has failed to win public confidence.

The AL should stop calling hartals which cause sufferings to the people. The two major political parties must work together for the greater interest of the

country. Roney On e-mail

has taken serious objection to it. What I feel a concern for me and

possibly for many others is a different subject. The subject matter is how long still further the miserable plight of the 'Biharis', who have been labelled so as a clear misnomer, because, in fact, they were the very unfortunate migrants from various Indian territories including albeit some from the State of Bihar following the partition of the British India in August 1947, would continue even now after nearly 35 years. Is not Bangladesh government guilty of persistently violating human rights of those thousands of

helpless people for decades? Rational social or political leaders however, have a solemn obligation, I feel, to settle the hang over effects without further delay just as the plight of the 'Biharis' of Bangladesh. The matter could well be settled through some open broad thinking on their part. I may dare to suggest the following points as a possible way out from the long standing vexing humanitarian issue once for

1. The willing among the lot in the so-called 'Geneva Camps 'who were not born in Bangladesh after 1971 and would declare their loyalty to Bangladesh Statehood, 90% of them is known to declare so, could right way be given the full citizenship of this country.

The few of the so-called 'Stranded Pakistanis (SP)' staying in the camps for the last three decades could be given a short time limit to pursue their goal of returning to Pakistan, failing which they should be given option to agree to take citizenship of Bangladesh. The matters relating to the

access to every opportunity a normal citizen would have. 4. All the above three undertakings should not take more than one year period to finish up, and having accomplished these tasks the socalled Geneva Camps kept running in the country for over three

I am certain that provided the government could approach the problem on the above proposed lines, it would put an end to the humanitarian problem.

Ibrahimpur, Dhaka

on TV

On the evening of 10th Muharram

citizenship of those born in the soil and territory of Bangladesh after 1971 should be settled though giving full citizenship to them and

decades should be closed down for good as they are a disgrace to the nation

M. T. Hussain

Ashura programme

Islam. They discussed the subject with great eloquence and mannerism. I liked the way they approached the idea and philosophy behind Ashura and the great sacrifice of Imam Hussain (R.A.). would like to congratulate the management of Boishaki for showing such an excellent programme on the significance of Ashura. I

Ashura, I saw a programme on

Boishaki television. The progra-

mme was regarding the signifi-

cance of Ashura. The panel con-

sisted of three learned scholars of

hope they will carry on with their wonderful work Muntazir Zaidi

> **International Mother** Language Day On this auspicious occasion 170 communities' leaders, scholars, poets and writers will adorn the

Gulshan, Dhaka

speakers' chairs and Premier Dalton MacGuinty and Mayor David Miller will declare the International Mother Language Day with a celebration of the ceremony on February 21 evening 5:00pm to 10:00pm 2006 at the Toronto Metro Hall, 55 John Street, Toronto. All are welcome. Mayor David Miller declared in his official Proclamation, "It was unanimously agreed to observe February 21, as International Mother Language Day to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilin-

Diverse communities and groups make up the population of Toronto whose residents come from over 200 countries and speak more than 170 languages and dialects. The City of Toronto values the contributions made by all its peoples and believes that the diversity of the history, language, heritage and traditions among its residents has strengthened Toronto.

The City of Toronto recognises that language is the cornerstone of culture and provides a means of communication among people to create a climate of understanding, leading to conditions of peace, dignity, respect, safety and harmonv

UNESCO proclaimed February 21, as International Mother Language Day in 1999 in honour of the many languages in the world. The resolution was sponsored by Bangladesh and adopted unanimously by all Members States of UNESCO. Mr. Sona Kanti Barua

Bengali Literary Association,

be around \$5 million, that is, one-fourth of the

one say why this Planetarium cost so much?

Toronto

Denmark and freedom of express

There is a country in this world where the government maintains a list of approved names for new born babies. The citizens of this country must choose a name from this list. If their desired name is not on the list, they have to make a special application to the government, which may not go in their favour.

You will be shocked to know that it is

that great country Denmark, which will do anything and everything for free speech and freedom of expression. Yes. While this Scandinavian country and Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) they their children according to their wish. Needless to say there are many trivial

goes on preaching freedom of expression when it comes to humiliating Islam

do not even allow their citizens to name



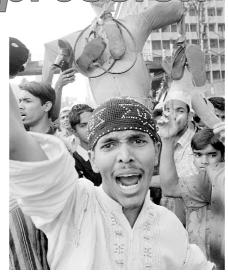
reasons provided by the Danish government for such restriction. However, at the end of the day, it is nothing but a restraint on freedom of expression (on a matter that is in fact, quite frivolous). If a Dane does not have the right to name his child as he wishes, then it is beyond my reasoning how can a Danish newspaper get away with publishing those disgraceful caricatures of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), an action which was undertaken with the clear intention of offending Muslims all over the world.

I generally do not like to state the obvious but that is sheer hypocrisy.

Brussels, Belgium

The notorious editor of the Danish newspaper reportedly went on an indefinite leave. This is not enough punishment for his heinous crime. The editor and publisher are yet to say sorry for their unpardonable misdeed. We strongly protest the publication of the said cartoon and demand that the culprits be brought to justice Muhammad Mamunur Rahman Muhammadpur, Dhaka

I think it's reasonable to demand that Europeans newspapers and editors be



put on trial for slandering and maligning the Prophet of Allah, Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) and in the

process, the entire Muslim community. In most countries, legislation is in place to protect a man's dignity and reputation from slandering. But in this case, the entire Muslim world has been

So I believe it is justified to demand that the editors who published these cartoons are put on trial for slandering an entire community. Shahnewaz Siddique Uttara, Dhaka

Costly Planetarium!

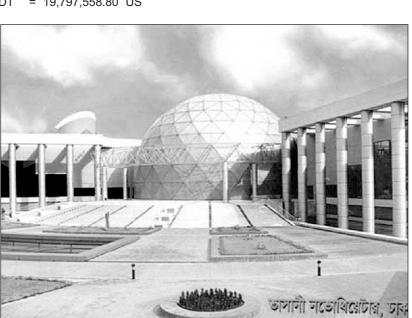
I read a news article about Planetarium "Bhasani on its own, for the very largest system, would Novo Theatre". It read as follows; "The planetarium after political tangles for years was finally set amount that Novo Theatre cost. Could anyup at a cost of Tk 133 crore at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

I did some rough calculations and 133 crore equals, correct me if I am wrong, Tk 1330 million. 1,330,000,000.00 BDT = 19,797,558.80 US

How on earth could a simple Planetarium have cost 19 Million US

Dollars when

even in the West, in places like the US ,Canada and UK you could easily buy AT LEAST 2 or 3 Planetariums including all buildings. I would challenge someone to call up GOTO or other planetarium suppliers and they will find that the maximum amount for the equipment



Zabidur Rahman