

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.

DISARMING HEZBOLLAH

Israel issue

President Bush made his position clear on the latest Israeli offensive against Hezbollah, accusing Lebanon of not disarming Hezbollah. Furthermore, the United States supports what they may call, "defending Israel." They all spoke like sold-out companies in the great business of war! As history speaks, Hezbollah was founded during an Israeli occupation of Lebanon, not for terrorist attacks. Though the formation of the organisation could have been debated, Israelis found their way to turn their anger on the Lebanese civilians.

It would be nearly impossible to believe that all bombs landing on the civilian structures were dropped on false information.

Tahsin Hyder
Lake Circus, Kalabagan, Dhaka

I agree whole-heartedly with Mr. Saiful Islam from Comilla about the three steps he had mentioned the international community should immediately take to resolve this current Middle East crisis.

However, let me add the fourth step, and the most important step, which is the complete disarmament of the militant group Hezbollah.

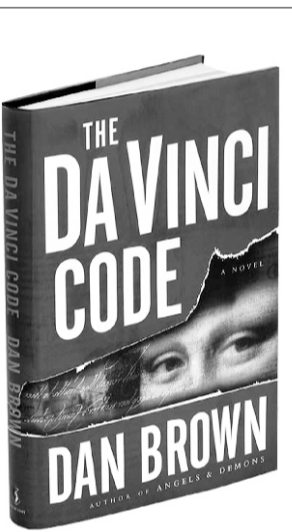
Aniruddha Barua
Nasirabad, Chittagong



Who are the extremists?

Muslims are the people who fight for their religion. This is the image that the westerners have created. They always have a special gift of talent of image creation, and their expertise of calling others with their own names must be praised. But the question is: 'Are Muslims alone responsible for that?' History is replete with incidents of brutality by non-Muslims. Now they want us to believe that all Muslims are terrorists. They started an assault against Arabs in the name of the war against terrorism. One by one they are attacking the Muslim countries. They are calling Palestinians extremists because of the suicide attacks. But have they ever thought how much mental pressure is needed for a man to commit anything like that? Tell me who is the extremist, a freedom fighter who defends his beloved country from the intruders and invaders like the Americans and Israelis or the illegal occupant of their land?

A.S.M Ahsanur Rahman Rahat, Shahjalal University of Science & Technology



Magic book

Mr. David Brown was an ordinary author but Vinci Code, his much talked about novel, made him famous overnight. It is an amazing book full of suspense, thrill, mystery and great finishing.

I do not know whether the writer was an atheist or not, but I was surprised how he could take Christianity so fiercely.
Muhmmad Bin Abdullah
Cox'sBazar

politicians in our country are always looking out for personal gains and never any positive development of Bangladesh.
Areader, Dhaka

Public figures and criticism

Mr. Mahmudur Rahman's actions and disrespectful comments about Dr Bhattacharya bring into question his role as our nation's representative to the foreign investors. He is a public figure and should accept criticism of any form from all quarters without recourse to the court. This after all is still a democracy and not a police state where public leaders are not accountable for their actions.

Personal clashes should not result in warrant orders, otherwise more than half the population will have to be brought into custody tomorrow.

In conclusion, our leaders must be tolerant to criticism as that is a hallmark of any democracy.
Raihan Alauddin
Stourbridge, UK

The trial of Colonel Abu Taher

My kudos to The Daily Star for publishing this report written by Lawrence Lifschultz. At the same time, I think that Lifschultz should have been more vivid in detailing the individuals, who were involved in carrying out this injustice. Nevertheless, the report has allowed us to get a picture of the injustice that has plagued our country since 1975. However, it is a matter of regret for our countrymen that it came from the penmanship of a foreign journalist even though we have many 'exceptional and talented journalists' in Bangladesh.

Thank you, Lawrence Lifschultz, for your dedication and courage and for providing us (the Bangladeshis) the opportunity to question our conscience once more.

As a separate issue, I would suggest that this report be translated into Bengali and published in Bengali newspapers so that the general population could learn about the whole thing.
Imran M. Khan, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
University of California San Diego, CA

Terror speech!

Recently the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Rajnath Singh appealed to the Indian government to attack Bangladesh for "giving shelter to alleged militants" who are crossing over to our side from Indian territory. How could he be so irresponsible?

From the very inception of this party, it is known as an extremist outfit. This party provoked many inhuman activities, riots and what not.

It is really unfortunate that a national level Indian leader could talk in that language.
MAH Nazim
University of Dhaka

Supporting enemies

It is funny how people bring up religion in everything. I am amused by some letters where people claim that the Jewish-Christian coalition is working against the Muslims and it is the reason Muslims are poor, deprived etc.

Weren't Jews and Christians bitter rivals in the past? Please do some homework, the Christian

Prophet Jesus Christ was humiliated and killed by Jews. No way they are allies in terms of religion. I firmly believe that mutual financial gains are keeping them together.

Muslims are blaming others for their distress. Just tell me names of five renowned world class Economists, Scientists, IT professionals. How can we expect to be world leaders without world class people? When Mr. Laden should have spent his money on educating young Muslims so that they could help build a great nation, he chose to spend money for buying arms from the US.

The Hezbollah and other groups are also spending a lot of money on buying arms from either the US or other enemy states!!
Abdullah Al Mamun
On e-mail

State offices

Thanks for the report on use of state offices for political purpose. The immediate government response was as usual, there is nothing wrong in it. They are just following the AL political culture.

However, one can expect that the high command of the ruling alliance will consider the report in its right perspective and take the initiative to avoid use of state offices for party activities.
Areader
On e-mail

Spreading hatred

Over the past month, conflicts in the Middle East have revealed a lot of Bangladeshi hatred for Israel and the United States. Just look at the letters page each day. Much of this hatred is obviously blind and appears to have its origin in religious intolerance.

Take for example, the letter in the 31 July issue in which the write states, "They have a hidden agenda... their ultimate goal is to rule the world from Jerusalem". He doesn't even mention who "they" are or provide support for this claim or any others. He does however, then pass sweeping remarks about "distorted scriptures" and the Chosen People, so I can only assume he is spitting venom at all Jews.

Such rhetoric serves no purpose other than to incite hatred. It avoids logic and facts, functions on rumours and assumptions, and tries to appeal to our basest emotions, rather than our intellect. And it always ends up sounding like a finger-pointing speech by a Bush or a Bin Laden or an al-Zawahiri.

For people who spew these extremist diatribes against the US and Israel, terms like 'Christian/Zionist conspiracy' are the backbone of reasoning, just like 'Islamic threat' is for the other side of the argument. These terms are not only vague and useless, they're damaging to any hope for conflict resolution. And generally, you'll hear them alongside other amusing but equally-harmful conspiracy theories such as 4,000 Zionists/Israelis/Jews absent from the Twin Towers, a claim which most sources say originated from Hezbollah's television station. Coincidence? What starts as mindless rants by a few people turns into belief for people halfway across the world.

Hate-filled monologues only repulse independent thinkers, twist the minds of the easily-influenced. How can Israel be the ONLY priority for a Christian patriotic America?
And I'm concerned that people

are writing letters to the DS only with the intention of venting and propagating hatred.
Sajid Chowdhury
On e-mail

Bol chief

I am absolutely disgusted to read that Mahmudur Rahman is taking members of CPD to court over alleged defamation comments.

Mr. Rahman accuses that CPD tarnished his image and the image of the country. Firstly, I don't personally know Mr. Rahman, but if he thought he was being wrongly accused then why did he not challenge CPD in a civil manner and perhaps hold a public meeting and bring along with him audited evidence to prove CPD wrong?

Secondly, as far as the image of the country goes we all know that Bangladesh is the most corrupt country on the planet, from the lowest to the highest ranking officials of the government. You cannot get anything done in Bangladesh without MONEY!

I think there is more to it than what it seems. He obviously has been supported by other quarters to create a drama, as election is so near, to stop CPD from holding other meetings at election time.

CPD along with Nagorik Committee and Shujan are doing a good job. They are working for democracy by demanding honest and reliable candidates for the next election - what is wrong with that? If we don't have honest and reliable politicians running the country how can it move forward in development and reduce poverty. We need more patriotic people.

My thoughts and prayers are with the members of CPD.
M.A. Malique, UK

Brutal assault

Recently, a barbaric incident took place at Patharghata, Chittagong, between Mr. Sydney Thomas Robertson and his landlord's sons who assaulted Mr. Robertson's son aged 15, daughter aged 17 and his wife after a petty quarrel over water supply in the building where they reside.

Therefore, on behalf of Mr. Robertson and on humanitarian grounds, we urge the law enforcers to take necessary action in this respect.

Peter J. Rebeiro
West Razabazar, Tejgaon, Dhaka

SMEs beyond Dhaka

Small and medium enterprises are the most vibrant and dynamic factor nowadays for the overall development of a country like Bangladesh. SMEs account for 90% of industrial structure and 25% of the GDP. Yet, there is no fixed policy about all the backward and forward linkages programmes related to SMEs. Our urban districts, suburban areas and rural areas may be included in this vibrant flow of progress. But seminars and symposiums are arranged only in Dhaka city.

Chittagong, the port city; industrial city Khulna and all such places have limitless potential as growth centres for SMEs.

Poverty reduction strategy Paper (PRSP) and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) will never be achieved unless the government pays due attention to the development of SMEs.

Financing, consultation and various other programmes must be continuously arranged to support the development of the economy as a whole.

Kohinur Akter
Dhaka University

Dean Jones

It's indeed sad that Dean Jones, the former Australia Test batsman turned TV commentator, was immoderate when he called Hashim Amla a terrorist while he took the catch to dismiss Kumar Sangakkara. Amla, who is a devout Muslim, was deeply hurt hearing Jones uttering such a word about him. But at the same time, I feel Dean Jones, who has many fans, for his charming way of commenting, has been dealt with rather harshly.

And to be honest, I took what he has said as an off-air joke. Hence, I thought asking Dean Jones for an apology would have been a far better option, than sacking him from his job.
Syed Nazmul Alam
Gulshan-2, Dhaka

Prayer and education

My mother was suddenly diagnosed with severe heart problems and told she would not live more than a few months, and on hearing this I returned to Bangladesh hurriedly on a few days' notice in 1968. I had just graduated from a university in New York and had started work in a Fortune 500 company as a Management Trainee. I was among one of the first few Bengalis to have been granted U.S. immigration status based on qualification under the new immigration law. I abandoned everything desirable for a young man of 24, and returned home to be with my mother. Despite an MRCP heart specialist's assessment that my mother would only live a short time, we lived happily for 30 more years together enjoying mother's love, care, attention and human dignity till my mother passed away in 1998.

I had been out of my homeland for almost 10 years at a stretch from 1959 to 1968 and missed large Eid congregations. I returned home a few days before Eid so I took the opportunity to join the large Eid prayer at Sylhet Idgah Maidan. It was a gathering of devotees estimated to be over 10,000 people. I enjoyed being able to pray there with the congregation, except for the long munazat which lasted almost half an hour. The Imam literally cried and wept during the munazat like a child, and asked for Allah's mercy and help for the people of Palestine, Kashmir and many other oppressed Muslim people of the world.

After 38 years, I still hear the same cry and munazat for Muslim Jahan in mosques. Allah has not yet showered his blessings on those suffering Muslims.

Prayer alone, without meaningful action, has not brought about an end to the suffering of these people. In the last 58 years since the creation of Israel, the Muslim Jahan kept praying without doing anything substantial. They continue to fight among themselves about who are Muslims and who are non-Muslims (Shia, Sunni etc.). Oil was discovered in the Arab world and they sold billions of dollars worth of oil. The western world paid the oil prices by the left hand and took the money back by the right hand by selling them useless military hardware with which the Arabs could wage war against each other, but which were not powerful enough to be used against US allies like Israel. A screw-driver that sells

Shahrukh Khan



Very recently, several Indian movie channels broadcast a few trailers of the upcoming movie "DON", featuring one of the greatest actors of the current Indian film industry and the heartthrob of 'billions', Shahrukh Khan. It would be impossible to describe how popular this man is, but for the readers' information: nearly 3.2 billion people all over the globe know him, which dwarfs the popularity of even a guy like Tom Cruise with 2.7 billion people knowing him.

However, I am not here to throw light on Shahrukh Khan or the film 'DON', but a matter that carries more importance than that. I believe everyone who has watched those trailers must have noticed a particular scene where Shahrukh Khan is seen blowing a puff of smoke in a very captivating style. Although I abhor smoking, but seeing one of my favourite heroes doing it in such an awesome style, for a moment I really thought of giving a try to imitate him. But then I realised the gruesome truth. Like me there are hundreds of thousands of diehard young fans of Shahrukh Khan all over the world, and the smoking scene is going to affect most of them, directly or indirectly. I can bet on the fact that, if not everyone, but a huge number of them will try to copy their hero (Shahrukh Khan).

In the end, I must say that I am not sure if my letter is going to stir anybody, but I am pretty convinced that smoking should not get this type of coverage.

Navid Anjum Chowdhury
Panchlaish, Chittagong

for 99 cents in New York City was sold for \$9.99 to wealthy Arab countries. An Arab prince can gamble and waste away \$10 million in a casino in Las Vegas, but till today there is not a single world class university of science and technology in the entire Arab world. The days are over when a few dozen warriors could win a country with horses and swords.

This is the age of technology. Using inflammatory hateful rhetoric and waging small terrorist battles will not lead to peace or Muslim power. The Arabs with their wealth could have built dozens of world class universities, hired top professors from the west, and met their professed enemies on more equal ground by developing and attaining economic and technological power. The world's intellectual field is dominated by people of Jewish background scientists, doctors, engineers and social scientists. A disproportionate number of them are Jews and that is not a crime, they earned it. Given the right kind of research facilities and money, they would have likely shared their knowledge with Arab academics. And, by this time, the Arab world could have thousands of scientists and engineers. Today's power, economic and technological, is based on wealth of knowledge and the proper government and societal environment.
Millions of Lebanese,

Palestinians and other Arabs will perish and Friday munazat alone will not help much, unless Muslims prepare themselves with the right weapon which is scientific and technical knowledge.

Confront your enemies with knowledge.
Munim Chowdhury
New York

Who is a terrorist?

Terrorists mean the people whose activities are against the interest of general people as well as the whole nation. But is there any absolute definition of a terrorist? The US and Israel consider the Hezbollah as a terrorist organisation. But Hezbollah is not a terrorist group to the people of Lebanon as well as to the people of Muslim countries. People of Muslim countries have great support for Hezbollah. Basically, Hezbollah fights against Israel to drive out the illegal occupants. Three former prime ministers of Israel were categorised as terrorists by the British because they murdered British representatives.

Accordingly, the term 'terrorist' is used according to one's own perspective. So, as there is no accurate definition of a terrorist, the UN has failed to define who is a terrorist.
Md. Johirul Islam
University of Dhaka



Football artist

Legendary footballer Zidane made an unlawful mess at the end of the final game. No excuse is enough to defend him. He was sent off but he is still the hero of France. A great name in football history. Zidane ended his great career with a shameful headbutt. He shouldn't have done this. This was not the first time in his 15-year career that he landed in this sort of a mess. But this time he sank the boat when he was in charge of it.

It was just a consolation for the French people that their golden boy won the Golden Ball award.
Rajiul Hasan, Sydney