

Our Readers Suggest . . .

Some of the selected suggestions out of hundreds we received from our valued readers on what they think the Daily Star should do.



Judging by all the sticks of a quality newspaper, The Daily Star is, certainly, the leading and influential one. coming to the needs of a cross section of its readers. Its claim to superiority and popularity, perhaps, rests on the fact that it did never compromise on question of principles or sided with any vested quarters. Rather, The Daily Star deserves to be praised for its patriotic-like defence of the political rights, for that matter, the civil rights of the people.

Four years ago, I was greatly fascinated to know that Mr S M Ali will give stewardship to a new English daily. And, one fine morning we saw the birth of a daily with a difference! As informed by the paper's present editor Mr Mahfuz Anam, without 'Ali Bhai' it was a trying time for him. As a professional scrutiner of newspapers and press trend observer, I can assure Mr Mahfuz Anam and his colleagues that The Daily Star have passed all the tests of a first class daily with flying colours. After the death of S M Ali, a patch of doubt crept into my mind, only for a while, that The Daily Star may not be the same again. But thanks to the ability of the Star team that it hardly took any time to settle down. For a few days, I felt that The Daily Star did not twinkle as if 'Ali Bhai' took away all the glitterings with him! No, he did not. Soon, the Star journalists proved that S M Ali's 'baby' was in the safest hands of his true disciples.

One pertinent question: How The Daily Star served the nation all these years? My answer is: It served the nation in more than one way. For instance, for a long time since our independence we did not find the so-called 'Editorial Institution' to function properly for unknown reasons. It sunk precariously low. There was a time when the 'editorial institution' was respected by governments. Sometimes a whole government had to labour hard to bail it out from an awkward situation created by a single editorial comment — be it from the pen of Ian Stephens, or Altaf Hossain or Abdus Salam, or Kuldip Nayyar. As if to salvage the 'editorial institution' from unparadonable 'inertia', S M Ali appeared from nowhere after an absence of approximately three decades. In fact, he played the role of a 'conscience keeper' and 'guide and philosopher' for the Fourth Estate, nay, for the whole of the nation. Through his innumerable informal writings he helped both the leaders and the people to inculcate the spirit of democracy, tolerance and, above all, good manners. Who else could be a 'better teacher on this subject than 'Ali Bhai' who was, to quote one of his admirers, 'the quintessence of human decency'?

In keeping with the paper's tradition, the present editor, Mr Mahfuz Anam, perhaps did his best to warn the concerned quarters to shun the futile paths of intransigence and egoistic whims. To keep democracy on the rail, The Daily Star on occasions did strike very hard upon the misleading quarters. By dishing out appropriate 'feedbacks', The Daily Star served the nation very well.

The Daily Star's 'Round Table' or 'Dialogue' journalism have been wonderful additions to our political and social arena. Its post-editorial columns are very rich. Equally rich is its magazine section. Incidentally, it is painful to point out that we notice a tendency in our country to forget the 'golden past' and its great leaders. The Daily Star can publish short bio-data of the illustrious sons of Bangladesh in the magazine sections, preferably with photographs or sketches. Dreaming the future without any knowledge of the past is like building castles in the air.

What has happened to The Daily Star's 30-point 'Agenda '94'? A probe into its fate may be of some interest to the readers. The Daily Star deserves to be congratulated for introducing 'S M Ali Prize for Investigating Reporting'. I fondly recall 'Ali Bhai's' assurance to his readers that they would be presented with The Daily Star's 'Who's Who' in one of its anniversary issue.

Abdul Kader
Bashabo, Dhaka

CONGRATULATION to The Daily Star on its Fifth Anniversary on January 14, 1995. The normal principles of journalism ought to be good enough for The Daily Star to serve the nation, its readers and also to ensure its future. The newspaper that follows the principles of journalism, can serve the na-

tion in every field of development and at the same time the readers would love to read it. We, the readers of The Daily Star, would wish that journalism would get a new life during the next year through The Daily Star and thus attain success automatically.

Andrew D Costa
46, Hemendra Das Road,
Dhaka



The Daily Star is now undoubtedly the most popular English newspaper in Bangladesh. Its news, always full of much inside story, is refreshingly presented, while the features published in it are informative, and often highlights on international issues. The Star scoops news as much as it boxes humorous items, and both increases the paper's readability. The sports page gives news and stories about the major games of the world, while the recently introduced travel page is making the readers tour-minded. Its pages on youths and women are as interesting as its weekend magazine, though in it one might sometimes see contributions more from foreign writers. Also significant is its willingness to place the readers' views, most liberally, in the column, 'Opinion'.

The interviews with the prominent people of the country are attractive as they allow us an insight into what these people are thinking. The Man-of-the-Year selection is also new to appear in a newsdaily in this country, and has so far been judiciously made.

But, above all, perhaps the Star is liked by so many for its editorials and commentaries which are written not only in response to the socio-political crises, that are bothering the citizens, but also written unambiguously showing a constructive vision which the politicians of the country had better appreciate.

Its founder-editor, the late S M Ali (to talk about whom millions of words would probably be too few) had inculcated two cardinal points of journalism in his colleagues — the courage to speak out conscientiously and to remain factually unbiased in reporting — which, we are very pleased to see, the present editor, Mr Mahfuz Anam, dedicatedly following.

In one of its very conscientious editorials, The Daily Star, on 15th August 1994, had earnestly called for repeal of the indemnity Bill, the blackest stain on our Constitution, while during the recent controversy over the caretaker-government issue it vehemently opposed negative politics and tried hard to instill a sense of responsibility into our uncompromising political leaders. It failed, but we praise such steps as we see that the paper is inspired by a desire to see the country, put on the right historical perspective, prosper and develop both economically and politically.

However, the Star has still room for much improvement. Reporting is one area where perhaps it is yet to catch up with its leading vernacular counterparts. Factual inconsistency is sometimes detected, names of students parties involved in campus violence are unnecessarily withheld, while sometimes second or third sources are used in reporting. The reporting section, therefore, should be backed up with new logistics.

The Star focuses on the activities of the business community a lot (in fact, no other paper is as much mindful of the businessmen as the Star), but at the same time, it should also publish investigative stories about the scandals and rackets rampant in this community.

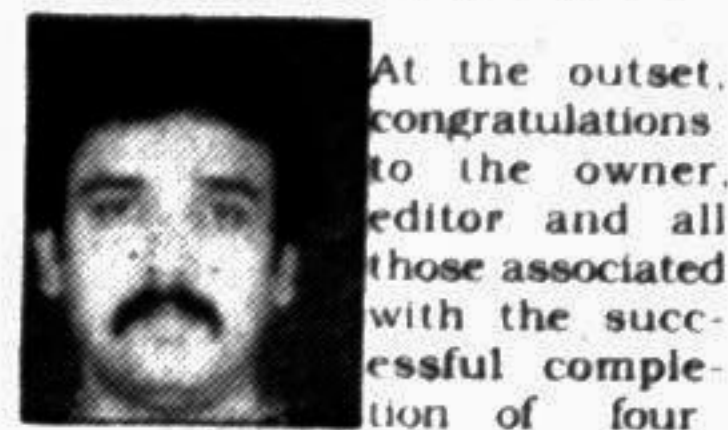
In order to improve the general level of English, The Daily Star had introduced a British Council lesson serial which did not seem to be either attractive or useful. Can the Star begin a nation-wide dialogue (as it did on the caretaker issue) seeking suggestions as how to improve the general level of English?

It is noticeable that the Star is very concerned about the plight of women in our society. It should, therefore, print more news and commentaries about tortured women, keep a count of the crimes committed against them, and try to form a natural resistance among the members of the public towards such malaise.

The Star should open an advisory column for young men and women in order to enable them to cope with frustration and disappointment.

Finally, three cheers for The Daily Star. March on.
Mohit Ul Alam, Assistant

Professor, Department of English, University of Chittagong



At the outset, congratulations to the owner, editor and all those associated with the successful completion of four years of The Daily Star. With only a small section of people in our country reading English newspapers it needed the courage and farsightedness of someone like late Mr S M Ali to bring out a new paper. Even after the demise of Mr S M Ali, the paper has not lost its focus of pursuing objective journalism.

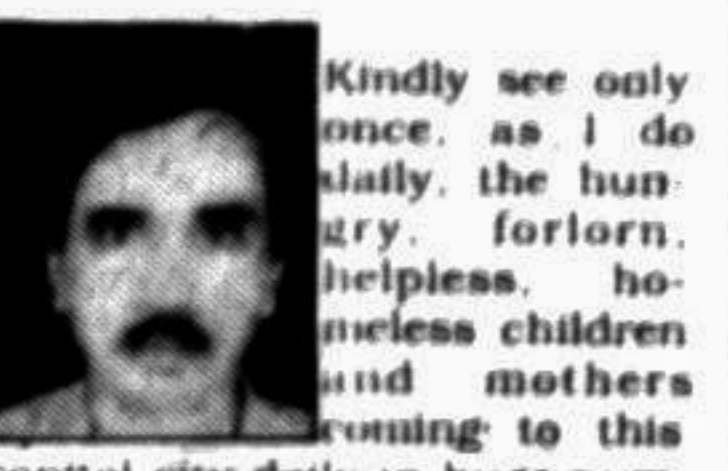
Generally speaking, The Daily Star is an attractive paper. Its main strength lies in its unbiased coverage of national issues. This enhances the credibility of the paper. The diverse background of the contributors also gives the readers a broader perspective. However, as a reader of English (and also Bangla) newspapers for the last 25 years (and someone who has switched to The Daily Star a year or so back) it may be worth placing some specific suggestions that would hopefully make The Daily Star an even more widely acceptable paper.

For the second year running, it was surprising to note that there was no write-up from the paper on the holy Shab-e-Meraj. The importance of this holy night for the Muslims cannot be overstressed. This is not expected of a paper, in which we like to see important social, cultural and religious occasions covered thoroughly.

Another area that could do with some improvement is that of sports, particularly, local sports. The two pages of sports that come out every day, except Friday, are generally quite recent and interesting reading. The local sports journalists in the paper could probably be more statistically-oriented while writing their reports. It is suggested that the sports writers maintain their own records and supply us such information from time to time. For instance, the positions of the teams in the football and cricket leagues could be provided after some regular intervals. It would also be fascinating to have interviews on sports personalities from home and abroad so that the readers can get expert views on the sport concerned.

Those of us who want information rather than prejudiced opinions are looking forward to The Daily Star to quench our thirst. God Bless The Daily Star and all those who want to speak out the truth. Because, eventually truth shall prevail!

Mahmudul Huq Khan, Ph.D
Assistant Professor,
Department of Statistics,
University of Dhaka.



Kindly see only once, as I do daily, the hungry, forlorn, helpless, hopeless children and mothers coming to this capital city daily in huge numbers. They are the victims of tragedies — divorce, crime, natural disasters like floods, cyclones, tidal-bores, river erosions, draughts etc.

They come to us, unknown and unwanted. Tears roll down their cheeks, denied the joys of normal child, hood and motherhood, they know only too well the bitter tastes of privation and neglect. Sometimes we call them tokais (street urchins); in the midst of our dazzling urban society, they constantly struggle to make a living.

Why should this happen in a land where the people could fight and shed blood for the cause of freedom?

It is portrayed by the people around the globe that Bangladesh is a poor country. But why? Because we thrive on public money but do not work for them. Because we seek help from those poor people in time of danger but do not look after them when they need our help. We seek vote from them but do not heed their genuine demands. This should change. Now is the time to make the people understand really who is to be voted and who not to be.

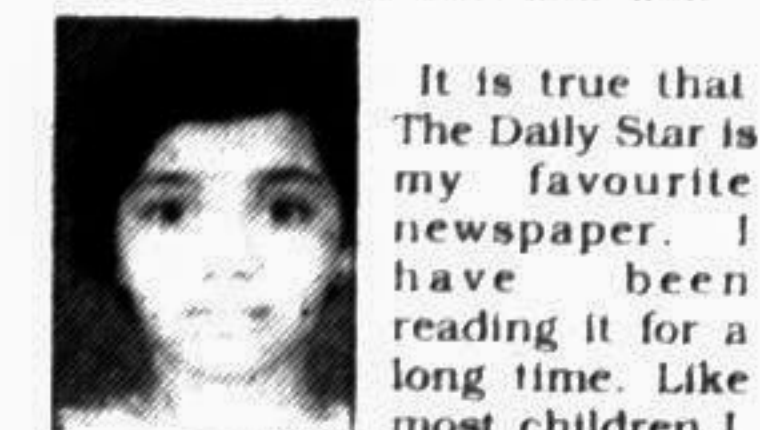
This is the time to identify the real social friend and also the foe.

Through your esteemed daily, you can make the people know that there is no scope of giving money to anybody as kickback at any level of administration. Administration is for serving the commonmen and while it is run by public money, Corruption is eating into the very vitals of our society. The

very foundation of the nation is collapsing due to corruption. Everybody should stand on the way to stop bribery. Privation and neglect should be withstood right now.

Please highlight the above subjects in your esteemed newspaper during 1995.

Md Abdul Azeez,
B-2/E-3, Agargaon
New Colony,
Dhaka



It is true that The Daily Star is my favourite newspaper. I have been reading it for a long time. Like most children I too don't find anything interesting in some sections like business, stock marketing, health etc.

I usually read the sports sections and sometimes the news headlines. I would like to make the following suggestions:

The Rising Star used to be published on Saturdays before, but now it is published irregularly on Fridays. Couldn't it be published on Saturdays again?

All the important notices could be written in different coloured headlines so that the reader would know it was important.

Sometimes there is nothing for children to read in the newspaper. A small article about something interesting could be put for children in the newspaper (if possible everyday).

News about competitions for children should be printed some time well ahead on the newspaper so that we can know about them and plan to participate.

A set of general knowledge, 'word power' questions could be printed to increase the interest of the readers (not necessarily everyday).

There could be an article which is educational about interesting facts on animals, plants etc (not necessarily everyday).

News from different districts should be printed in a different section and possibly matters of interest in each district could be highlighted so

that we get to learn more about our country.

All advertisement should be put in one page.

There was a language section some time ago, but it is not being printed now. It was very interesting. Please start it again.

There should be a guide for Bangladesh radio too.

All sorts of political news should be put on one page.

The different sports items should be put in different sections, eg football and cricket could be separated.

There should be special features on the lines of famous people on a weekly basis.

Many people in Bangladesh have done interesting deeds (eating stones, keeping football on the head etc). These facts have not been printed in the newspaper. Don't you think it is worthwhile printing?

There should be a flashback of all the important news in the end of the week.

I think there should be a section on the lives of different types e.g teachers, doctors, farmers, labourers, writers etc describing their achievements.

I like the way the Daily Star has started the new entertainment guide for television programmes. I have always liked the crossword puzzle and cryptogquip section.

I must say that The Daily Star has got a lot of popularity so far. I sincerely hope my suggestions are good enough to be considered by you.

Farzan Saleh
Class VII Green Herald
International School, Dhaka

I am very happy to learn that The Daily Star is going to step into its 5th year of publication on 14th January 1995. I am a regular reader of The Daily Star and passionately love this paper.

On the occasion of the 5th year of publication of The Daily Star, first of all, about whom I have to write something here is Mr S M Ali (founder editor of the paper) one of the most famous journalists in South and South East Asia. Mr S M Ali

tried his best to make this daily a prestigious and readable English language newspaper. Through his writings (My World and Home and Abroad columns, commentary, articles) it has been proved how much feelings and love he had for the exploited, neglected and the suffering people of his land. In my opinion, journalism must be objective and neutral. Mr Ali infused such type of journalism through his writings after returning from abroad.

Here I also have to thank all

others who have worked for this daily to the best of their ability to meet the readers' expectations and also the guest columnists and contributors for their considerable number of writings which have increased and broadened the knowledge and outlook of the readers to a great measure.

As I am a sick person, so I am not in a position to give much suggestions for the improvement of The Daily Star. But what I must say is that The Daily Star has been able to

keep its standards high as before till now. But I would urge all of this paper to write their reports more courageously and that they should never be afraid to present facts and focus on various social evils, no matter how unpleasant that may be.

May The Daily Star serve according to the expectations of its readers in the days to come.

Md Delowar Hossain
431, North Shajahanpur,
Dhaka-1217
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Through the Eyes of an Insider

by Atiqul Karim

THE Daily Star has stepped into its fifth year of publication today. What we have done during the last four challenging years, is obviously a matter to be judged and evaluated by our readers and critics. But above all, what everybody in the media would undoubtedly agree is that we are very much in progress in translating into reality what our late founder-editor S M Ali had actually dreamt of the paper from absolutely a non-partisan angle.

Having a vivid look four years back, we started our journey in the midst of lots of uncertainties ahead, including a tumultuous political situation across the country which later on paved the way for transition to democracy.

The moment the government of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia was formed (when the country was in disarray following the ouster of H M Ershad), The Daily Star had come up with a distinctive role in guiding the new government in the formulation of policies. With equal respect for the opposition political parties, the paper took a bold initiative to iron out their differences with the ruling BNP on the basis of a consensus on common issues of development.

It is a pity that despite the repeated note of caution with constructive guiding by The Daily Star, the parties in conflict rather started to isolate them from the democracy loving people for reasons best

known to them. Thus, in the event of BNP's failure to create a democratic polity with an honest thinking of accommodating opposition's views in the state media, specially on radio and television, country's biggest opposition party, the Bangladesh Awami League, flinched back from pinpointing the loopholes or lapses, what ever we call, of the ruling party which was demanded of them under the changed political scenario. The irony is that both the leaders i.e. Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina were found wasting time in mud-slinging and blaming each other rather than doing their job suitably for which they had received people's mandate for a term of five years.

In a democratic country, the role of media is of utmost significance. The Daily Star, in vindicating its role as a neutral paper, has always been sincere in its efforts to warn the government of the dire consequences of monopolising the media defying the interest of the major opposition parties. The opposition parties having been frustrated had chosen the 'Strategy of Hartal' to reach their message to the people which could not be endorsed by The Daily Star. The BNP deserves criticism for monopolising media like radio and television in as much as these didn't carry the news of oppo-

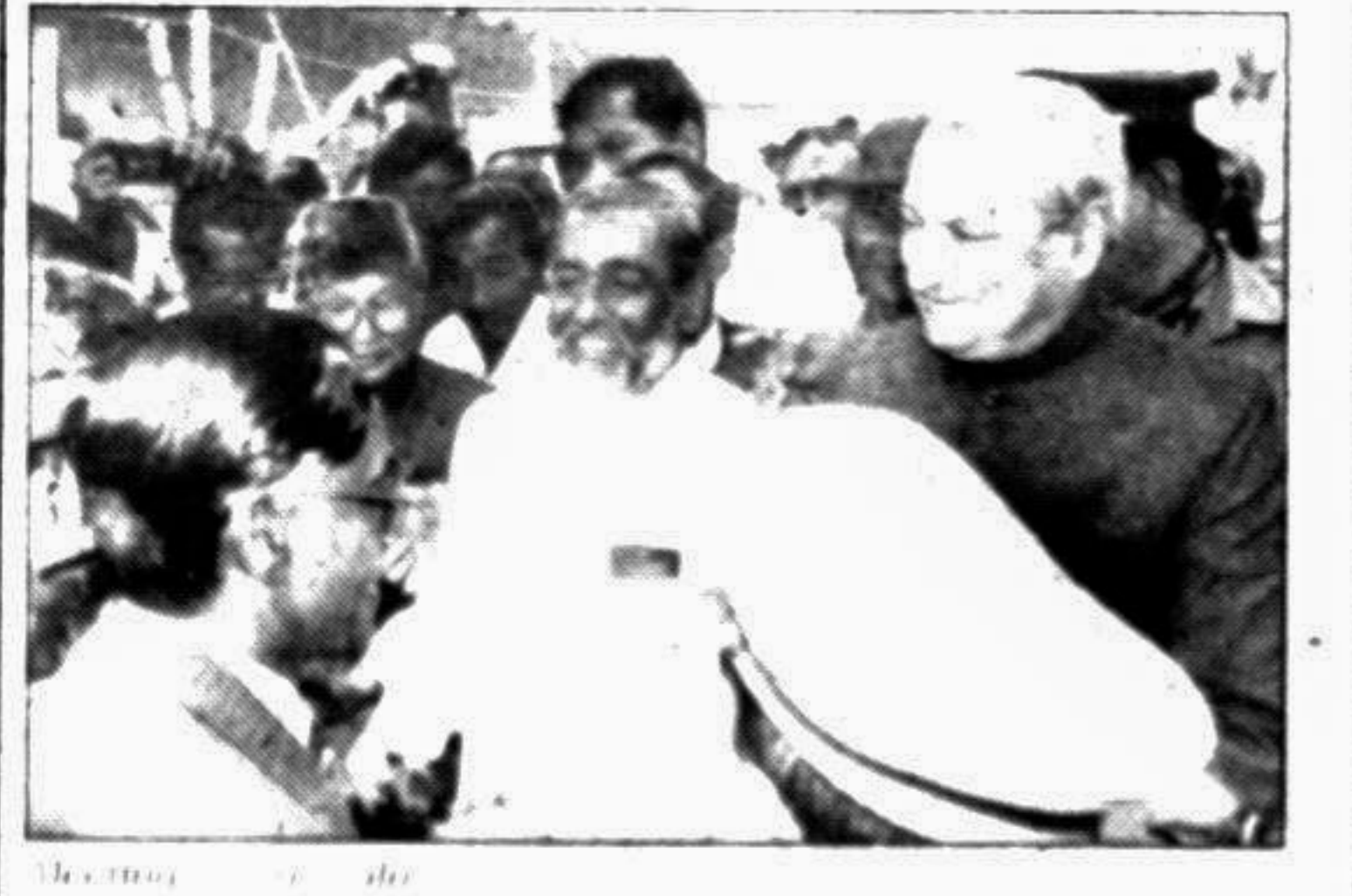
sition MPs' resignation en masse from the parliament. The most sensitive issue confronting the nation today is to judge the legitimacy of the opposition demand of holding future elections under a neutral caretaker government. The Daily Star projected its views clearly before the people in due time assessing the gravity of the situation.

Apart from political issues, The Daily Star has been playing a pragmatic role in the flourishing of the country's open market economy. With the passage of time, the paper reflected much on the theme which has culminated in the inflow of foreign capital in the country in larger proportion. As far as study materials are concerned, again our readers are the best judges to give their verdict whether The Daily Star is a complete paper or not.

Now, I am not sure whether The Daily Star has isolated it from the opposition parties by not supporting the 'hartal' issue on certain vital reasons. From this standpoint, there can't be any alternative to the beginning of a fruitful dialogue arising out of the resignation of opposition MPs from the parliament. I hope The Daily Star will intensify its efforts to bring back the opposition political parties and the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) to a negotiating table to remove the stalemate. This, in turn, will help people live in peace and tranquillity, I believe.

Return of Chakma Refugees

Recorded by our Chief Photographer
AKM Mohsin



Meeting with Suami Bahin



Chakma



Chakma



Second batch of Chakmas arriving



Meeting with Suami Bahin



Chakma



Chakma



All come