# The Daily Star

## Manavzamin and freedom of press

This is in regards to Mr Saanee's letter (29 May) defending the courts verdict on Manavzamin I am actually amazed that so few

people have protested regarding this issue.

The courts cannot demand to know the source of a leak or story. That is a violation of one of the most fundamental rights of a free press. Imagine if this law were in effect in the US, Deep Throat the source for the Watergate scandal would never have come forward.

Anyway the courts verdict appears to be such because one of their own was implicated accepting bribes.

Editors and journalists, much as one may despise some of them. have to be protected from those seeking revenge for revelations that have hurt them

I am not a lawyer but I do not have to be one to say that this verdict was

Finally the Registration Certificate ment in addressing the problem. will be issued by the Registrar of Inland Vessels who is also under DOS. The Ship's owner has to go back to IWTA for route permit, timetable etc.

built as a stable one.

ble launches with poor stability. No

stability information booklet is

available on board and the semi-

So, to get a passenger ship built three set of people come in the picture and they have no interaction or co-ordination among themselves and they are answerable to none. Needless to say that lot of money changes hands which adds to the cost but has no bearing on the safety of the passengers. As per the Report, ISSA should

gers. Average weight of passenger let us assume to be 75 kg including their luggage that they are currying. be an autonomous body under Dept The launch will have an extra bodily of Shipping (DOS) with full complesinkage of five inches only. For this ments of Marine Engineers, Naval extra five inches draft the launch

Architects, Ship Surveyors and Inspectors. It should provide complete service under one umbrella right from approval of drawings to supervision during construction and on completion in a shipyard carry out all tests, among others, for stability and water-tightness.

I connection to Aslam Pervez's letter People tried to over simplify the (May 17) about the plight of the problem by blaming overloading of Biharis in Bangladesh. I would say passengers thereby putting the Mr. Nasim Khan did not do a good blame squarely on the unfortunate job by keeping his people's hope passengers. In fact a well build and alive that one-day Pakistan will stable launch will never sink accept them as its citizens. because of overloading. Let us take

Truly speaking Pakistan never the case of a 120 ft long and 30-ft had any kind of sincere concern for beam launch. The vessel will have a the Bihari migrants rather they used TPI (tons per inch immersion) of them as a fifth column against the 6.25 tons. Let us say the vessel is Bengali nation. This selfish motive is now clear that in Pakistan Bihari carrying four hundred extra passenmigrants are still oppressed and discriminated. History is full of tragic stories when an ethnic minority suffered and humiliated due to their failure to adopt and accept the culture of the dominant majority can not sink provided the launch is This is what really happened with the Bihari population in Bangladesh. The reasons why these launches

PLQ

Akbar Hussain sink so frequently are as follows: -Toronto. Canada a) Launches are not built as unsta-

## Some assumptions

The Awami League may now boldly go forth with an agitation program it

"Talk or no talk, AL should join parliament"

I read your Editorial "Talk or no talk, AL should join parliament (May 29)."

AL, then BNP and then again AL during a decade of otherwise successful democracy in Bangladesh have created a bad precedence of boycotting the parliament on the plea of non-congenial atmosphere in the parliament. You have very rightly said that the parliament is not the extension of the government. Very correct. The members are elected by the people with a mandate, to express their views through the parliament, and give voice to the elector's hopes and aspiration and also help the government in administering laws of the land properly by pointing out its lapses.

Perhaps the opposition, of whichever party, is afraid to face a parliament and deliberate because it needs lots of homework and research to be in a position to debate. It is easier to sling mud and filthy words than debate any point constructively. Probably the mentality of boycotting comes from the inherent ignorance and absence of education among the MPs in general. Once a few years ago I had read in your esteemed daily that barring a few, hardly an MP had ever stepped in to the rich library of the parliament where valuable proceeding of the previous parliaments and Assembly's and of foreign parliaments are available.

Well Mr. Editor, given the present trend it will be necessary to

a sad event in our judicial history and a mark of shame for our country. Cervantes

## Port strike

Dhaka

Again the extortionist trade unions of Chittagong port are holding our country hostage to their demands. The government should put its foot down this time and give its ultimatum to the unions. Either return to work or be fired.

In event that the unions call the governments bluff, the port should be put in the hands of the Navy to ensure that our nation's commerce is not destroyed by some goondas.

This is exactly the reason why we need a private terminal in the first place. I am waiting to hear from Col. Akbar what he's going to do about this

Peter Dhaka

#### ports. The Surveyors should carry out annual surveys and renew fitness" certificates. The inspectors should watch out for overloading of passengers and cargo and that the load line are not immersed. Now this concrete proposal had been there since 1993. It is not understood as to why ISSA had not

been activated by DOS while the situation in IWT sector is going out of control Sakhawat Hossain

Chartered Engineer Dhaka

No talk, join change the quality of MPs first. Bibek On e-mail It should ensure that the ship-both passenger and cargo-- built according to the approved drawings

about stability of floating objects. bags on the upper deck. open during voyage.

Remedies A) A separate classification society for inland and coastal vessel must be started as non-profit organisation. Their job would be to approve drawing and design of inland and coastal vessels, formulate rules for construction of coastal and inland vessels, supervise construction of vessel, carryout annual survey and special survey of all inland and coastal vessels. This will ensure building of safe and stable launches B) Passenger vessel must not be allowed to carry any cargo and this

sealed to prevent any water going in to the hold. As regards existing vessels, their inclining test must be carried out

may have planned for the present BNP government, now that their figurehead has returned to the country and may conduct these endeavours accordingly

Meanwhile, in the land of strange people and spices (not New Orleans), namely, India, the war footing is being prepared. Tensions rise against long time nemesis Pakistan, something predicted early on to escalate much later into something of gargantuan proportions. The years between the 1971 war and the present day were definitely a peace, but an uneasy one. Fastforward a bit more. Indian aircraft violates Bangladeshi airspace. Evebrows are raised, and in due course, the government raises fuelled questions about India's actions. This is where all political loyalties and ideology start to kick into effect

The BNP will seize upon the opportunity to pounce upon India and show solidarity with Pakistan, children, office goers and factory workers. The turning from Bijoy Sharani on to Begum Rokeya Sharani is especially congested since all the traffic from the far wider road has to be squeezed into a road a third of the size.

However, amazingly for Dhaka, you hardly spend more than three to four minutes at most getting through this choke point. This morning at 8.45 am, I had

the privilege of seeing a biscuit coloured 2002 model Toyota Land Cruiser with furled flag and State Crest go down the wrong way on Begum Rokeya Sharani. The Minister wasn't even in the car! But you want to know what made

me proud? Even though traffic was completely backed up on the other side, not one other car or tempo followed his example.

Don Quixote Dhaka

#### Newspaper holiday Mr. S. Chowdhury spoke my mind. I

fully endorse his suggestion. On May 26 noon (Pacific Standard Time), I logged on to the Internet to read my favourite newspaper, all to discover that there will be no issue. After waiting (and hoping the update was late), I finally realised Sunday was a public holiday in Bangladesh and therefore, there will be no issue of The Daily Star on Monday (May 27).

For us expatriate Bangladeshis, The Daily Star is the most sought after source of news and views from Bangladesh. To have news blackout, sometimes for days (during the two Eid) is unthinkable in the developed world. Imagine BTV and ETV following

the footsteps of the newspaper industry, cancel their evening news broadcasts on holidays. For Bangladeshis in North America, where BTV and ETV is not available, the effect is the same.

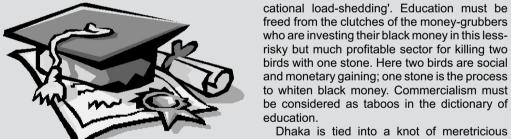
California, USA

#### Reviewing channel ban

I have been most interested to read the arguments for and against the banning of television channels on the grounds that their programmes are 'against our culture'. How well I know that feeling! In the UK, some of us have been through all this, for a very long time, and have said, "We do not want those awful American

It is quite natural for many of us to worry about the quality of the programmes our children are watching. Some people are even more worried about what their neighbours' children are watching and other members of what they

# Dhaka-- a fertile land of producing private universities



# England team and their boots

DHAKA FRIDAY MAY 31, 2002



#### Good luck with your boots and balls

- Something has just occurred to me about the England football team's bad luck with their foot problems.
- Has anyone checked to see if there is a problem with the football boots that they are all using?
- Perhaps there is a fault with the design, if there is someone had better sort it out quickly to provide a better boot! The very best of luck to the team!

back home.

never to come back again. And their

parents go on lamenting, when their

sons (and daughters) will come

viewers, don't feel to understand the

problems our country is now beset

with, let alone to give a thought to

finding the way out from them. They

grow, in their hearts, some sort of

apathy towards this country, for its

portray those societies and coun-

tries, which are so different from that

of ours from every respect. India is a

poor country, but the cameras of

Indian satellite channels very cau-

tiously avoid the abject poverty of

that country, and give a notion to

their viewers that that country is

flowing with milk and honey. And a

great section of our youths are

foreign, such as, English or Hindi

film, listen to their music, for enter-

tainment, but not all day long, year

The satellite channel is not the

only cause, which is alienating our

educated vouths from the main

stream: it is one of the main causes.

We are to redress these causes as

after year as addicted.

Occasionally we may watch

rdent viewers of these channels.

These alien satellite TV channels

being poor and backward.

The youths, the satellite channels

#### Julian On e-mail

street. Well that's not true...if we get shot in the head, we'll be dead but our culture will still be intact. The job of the government is not

to control our culture; it's not to protect our minds or blinker our thoughts. The job of the government, it's primary responsibility, is to provide security of person and property for all its citizens-something they have utterly failed to

Saad Hossain Motijheel, Dhaka

**Banning cable** up laws that are effective against the

# channels

In a perverse move the government days because some broadcasting decided to ban several satellite knows no national boundaries and. channels. In a nation where the through the Internet, all sorts of population is starving for alternate awful programmes can be accessed sources of entertainment the gov-- including 'hard' pornography and ernment's decision was ridiculous to the abuse of children. Insist on say the least. Channels like HBO. monitors being appointed to check MTV. V and Hallmark are viewed the accessibility of the really horrible throughout the world including stuff and on action taken against it. almost all of the Muslim world but Also insist on police being alerted only in Sonar Bangla it is considered about those who are watching child a threat to our social and cultural pornography, downloading it and values. Are our cultural and social distributing it through their own values that weak?

This regime seems intent on

much as possible, if possible the all. **Faruque Hasan** Dhaka

### Liberty does not mean license

When there were tremendous



literate crew does not have any idea b) Carrying of heavy cargo like rice c) Keeping hatch covers of holds

is to be strictly enforced. C) Holds are to be permanently

AA

programmes over here!" networks which practice child

otherwise encourage (e.g. through using their own networks for advertising) - good quality programmes in order to keep the standards up. When they do that, they are expressing the responsibility of the whole of society to educate people to want what is good, give them a

cannot watch!"

flavour of it and create a demand for 2. Parents can be helped to educate their children to be selective view-

ers, and know when to insist the television is turned off! I have English friends who never bought a television until their youngest child was 16. There are also parents who get a television but no aerial and join a video library and thus select the programmes that their children can see. These are radical alternatives, there will be screams of protest but some say it is worth it! Newspapers and religious and educational organisations should give frequent reviews of good children's programmes that are available on video and help them to be accessi-

Parents of children who are

friends with each other and who are

in and out of each other's houses

frequently, can come to an agree-

ment about what programmes they

can watch and what they cannot.

This avoids children playing one

household off against the other and

all disappearing into the most per-

4. Politicians do have a duty to draw

worst excesses - and these have to

be agreed internationally these

abuse. I hope this is being done

missive household at certain times!

ble - and affordable.

EDITOR

religious and non-religious, are as

appalled as any, even in Bangla-

desh, about the values that are

transmitted by some programmes.

But, technically, the genie is out of

the bottle, people have the freedom

to see what they want and rather a

lot of them take the attitude of many

of your correspondents, sir, who

say, in effect, "None is going to tell

MF what I can watch and what I

us in the High Standards Brigade

may groan, the battle is not lost and

there are things that can be done in

1. Religious and other charitable

organisations can subsidise - and

the UK and may work here also: -

However, even though those of

## **Boost up fisheries** sector instead of goats

Recently the government has taken necessary steps to increase the number of goats. Though it is a good initiative in a economic viewpoint but the authority should be concerned about some matters such as goat grows very slowly and become mature in a long-time for reproduction and also goats are the threats to the culture of vegetables if they are not controlled

On the contrary Bangladesh has a large number of aquatic reservoirs and by proper utilisation that means by culturing fish, we can have more profit than any other source in a short period. Also, the demand of fish is increasing in the developed countries, as the fish flesh does not contain cholesterol. Also, the fisheries sector may provide employment opportunities to the unemployed people. In addition, some of our precious and local species are now threatened or endangered.

So, the government should take necessary steps to boost up fisheries sector for growth of national economy

#### Mamun Chowdhury On e-mail

#### Floating danger

I refer to your report by Morshed Ali Khan (May 14). After the worst ever disaster of Salahuddin-2, a lot of dirty linen are being washed in public but understandably, nobody could come out with any objective suggestion for prevention of such tragic accidents. Your reporter had put his finger on the main problem but everything is not as it looks from the outside.

As somebody who had been closely associated to Inland Water Transport (IWT) in various capacities. I would like to offer my humble opinion as below:

For building an inland passenger or cargo ship there exists an anomaly in that the drawing or the blueprint has to be approved by IWTA. But during construction in a shipyard the supervision, at least on paper, is done by a free-lancing member of a panel of Naval Architects.

After completion, the ship is tested and surveyed by the Engineer and Ship Surveyor of the Department of Shipping (DOS).

Launch disasters or is it a cruel ioke? In the past one month there has

and have all the requisite naviga-

tional, fire fighting and life saving

appliances for safe operation. ISSA

In order to enforce the safety

administration, the Engineer and

ship Surveyors and Inspectors

should be posted at all major river

should also assign a load line.

been as many as three major launch disasters, which are being passed on as accident to the gullible public. But on a closer look it will become obvious that these are criminal negligence by the authority and indifference of successive govern-

with questionable stability can be modified to improve stability to acceptable level may also be allowed to ply. Salahuddin Ahmad Dhanmandi. Dhaka

**Plight of the Biharis** 

# Exhaust from diesel engines causes asthma

Health experts have long known that exhaust from trucks. buses and other diesel-powered vehicles aggravates asthma in people who have the disease. But a new study says these emissions can actually cause asthma, not just make it worse.

Gina Solomon, a medical doctor and a senior scientist at the Natural Resources Defence Council in the USA, has coauthored the study, which looked at how people's respiratory systems react to diesel fumes.

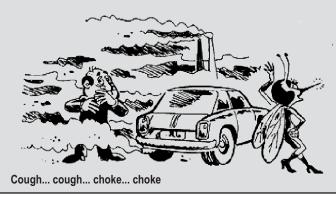
The sooty particles that come out of diesel engines have toxic chemicals attached to the outside of the particles, which seem to trigger inflammatory and allergic responses in the airways. These particles cause changes in the lining of the airways and lungs, and in "T-cells", part of the body's immune svstem

There are certain changes that are triggered by diesel exhaust, which can be permanent. They can include alterations in the types of T-cells in the lungs and the responses of those cells to other kinds of allergens.

Solomon says that this can result in asthma and that kids are very much at risk. We have seen the most dramatic increases in asthma in young children, children under the age of six. Asthma in that age group has risen by about 160 percent over the last ten years, which is a very dramatic rise. We think that the greatest vulnerability to the development of asthma occurs in the very young.

Diesel exhaust might be partly responsible for the rising rates of childhood asthma. Some other studies have shown that diesel fumes can combine with other environmental contaminants to cause lung diseases.

M.A. Obaydullah Banani, Dhaka



provided India does not provide due and only stable vessels should be retribution for its deed. And trust me. allowed to ply. Some of the launches if she doesn't, the BNP will find a reason to stand by her country. The Awami League will steadfastly stand by any explanation India is willing to give because, well, it's the done thing. At least for them. Anvthing to make the BNP feel the rub

The two political parties will come to a head. India and Pakistan will fight, but the Bangladeshi government will be divided as to whom to support.

History never repeats: it simply rephrases.

fkn

Dhaka

# Failure of our diplomacy!

Our Prime Minister's month long US visit will bring nothing for Bangladesh in real sense. It is a typical visit by a third world country leader with families, at the expense of the poor people s/he supposed to serve in the name democracy.

We could only justify a personal trip for medical reasons, but bringing bunch of family and party members in NY, at the expense of the exchequer is unacceptable.

Now, if it were supposedly a visit to gain something diplomatically, hopefully financially for Bangla desh, then it was a total failure. Did our PM meet the US President to discuss bilateral issues? What was our Ambassador doing to facilitate that? Mr. Ambassador should get lesson 101 from his Nepali Colleague on how to approach the US administration, FYI Nepali Prime Minister did come to US, and met the US president to discuss important issues.

We are sick and tired of our hard foreign currency going through the drain, to upkeep this so-called elite diplomatic corps, which in realty is becoming a white elephant for our exchequer. When will we see Ambassadors with courage and vision to get appointed who truly serves the nation, rather than himself or the political party he wants to cash (or, cashed) in.

Nafees TX. USA

## **Rush hour**

Everyday during rush hour the roads around Bijoy Sharani are completely jam packed with school-

#### The education trade

The Private University Act 1992 has a prolific ingenuity. Due to the charisma of the act umpteenth private universities are seen in the nook and corner of Dhaka City. Today Dhaka is world-widely famous for mosques; tomorrow Dhaka will be famous for private universities. I am not opposing the theme of private university but its mushroom growth is needed to stop unless our tertiary level of education will be ended in a fiasco.

Unsystematic establishment of private universities are creating disequilibrium in the arena of education. The day is not so far away when the university-goers as well as their guardians will taste the pungent taste of 'edu-

alreadv

consider are the potentially criminal classes! What will the nation come to, if this stuff is lapped up? Are we not responsible, as a society, for what we allow into our sitting rooms?

Many UK Christians, and others whose standards and values were offended by the increasing number of programmes that, in our opinion. were 'rubbish', protested and deplored, campaigned and argued while our government, like those elsewhere, was seduced into changing the law by the siren voices of the commercial pressure to turn television into a business of 'delivering audiences to advertisers'. Gone were those happy days when we had two non-commercial channels from the dear BBC and were spoilt for choice, so high were the standards! Now we have umpteen channels in which good programmes are hard to find among the 'rubbish' and so often come up in working hours or in the middle of the night that one needs a video machine to be a truly selective viewer. Peak viewing times are

dominated by the 'rubbish' that most people, it seems, want to see - and the children are available to see it. It is very easy to blame the awful

standards on 'America' but this is too facile an argument because good programmes come from there also and thousands of Americans,

who are investing their black money in this lessrisky but much profitable sector for killing two birds with one stone. Here two birds are social and monetary gaining; one stone is the process to whiten black money. Commercialism must be considered as taboos in the dictionary of education.

Dhaka is tied into a knot of meretricious private universities erected overnight. The galling gales of private universities are making academic suffocation for the innocent admission-seekers come from the remotest rural areas. The modus operandi of the commercially run private universities changes the longcherished impression regarding university, university education and university teachers.

University is a zenith of moral faculty. It is our duty to come forward to rescue the future generation from the hands of the Pied Pipers. The University Grants Commission under the aegis of the Ministry of Education must read the aetiology of genesis of Dhaka based private univer-

Hierophant On e-mail

banning everything. What is to It is not easy to have high stanprevent them from banning CNN dards but hey! This is Millennium and BBC next? I am sure that day living - the downside! But is it the too is not far away. How about 'downside'? Is it not just that we are banning the mediocre semi-porn given more freedom and with it Bangladeshi movies or the rubbish comes more personal responsibilthat comes from BTV in the name of ity? Why should you and I resent news and entertainment? Unless of that? What is it, in us, that make us course you consider the antics of demand that someone else - the the Home Minister. Shipping Minisgovernment? - should play 'Big ter. Sports Minister. etc. entertain-Daddy' and monitor everything for ment us so we do not have to make SK responsible choices for ourselves?

Australia

Why no to alien satel-

Our government could not stick to its

decision to shut down some satellite

TV channels. It's not the question of

adverse effect on our culture or our

religious sentiment that for we must

shut down the alien satellite chan-

nels. The logic for shutting down

those channels lies some where

satellite TV channels for years

together gradually alienates our

young generation from the harsh

reality of our society and country.

Gradually these youths become

alien in their own country.

Watching of the programs of alien

lite channels

growing up? Welcome to the real world!

Is this issue not also, in part, about

Angela MV Robinson Haluaghat

## And they're banning music channels!

In our country we are regularly exposed to murder, prostitution, extortion, kidnapping, drug abuse and unbridled corruption. How could the government even suggest that a couple of music channels are damaging our society in any way? People are afraid of walking the streets and they're banning cable channels?

It's ludicrous to think that MTV and Channel V can ruin our culture more than aetting shot in the head through crossfire while crossing the

debates on the issue, whether the German Chancellor used hair die or not, the Chancellor's hairdresser made the most notable comment. He said, "If this is today's debate, then I must say that it proves we have no other problems as a nation." The Chancellor by the way is proved as very successful as a state-leader.

Few opinions in the Letters to the Editor against the banning of some TV channels were simply rubbish, partial and nonsense. Those letters rather supported our present government I would say. But we have many other severe problems to concentrate on and fix up.

I don't think that satellite channels were "a dream come true" for our people. Because, our people did not seriously demand it, at the time when they had been introduced to it. This demand has been being generated over the years, since cable connection reached our bedrooms. Commencement of airing the BBC and CNN during the early 90s was a history-making step set by the then BNP led government. I can clearly remember that even the arch-rivals had to praise that brave-move. It was really a great privilege for our people to share the fair and free opinion and broadcastings. People gradually got acquainted with other atellite channels.

Something good is always followed by some bad. Alien (Evil) cultures by the way also entered our drawing rooms. People naturally reacted adverselv to the Star Movies that used to show uncensored 18+ movies, TB6, TB4 and some other channels. Subsequently, such channels, due to the pressures on them brought reasonable change in their programs later on and some channels were prohibited to be run. Those decisions were logical, timely and praiseworthy taken by the respective governments. Now almost a similar decision has been enacted. Some of the letter writers on 22nd May suggested the government to be rational in decision making. But, I don't find anything more rational than what has been done. For the benefit of a handful of so-called upper class. cultured people, the Information Ministry should've changed the decision of

#### banning those channels. S. Arif Mahmud

Haji Mohammad Muhsin Hall, DU

Being mentally alienated, they start dreaming to leave this country as soon as possible, at any cost,