The Daily Star

TO THE EDITOR

Rohingya refugee repatriation

It is interesting to note that the Government of Bangladesh is fundamental changes to the situation for which the refugee had taking all-out measures to complete repatriation of remaining 21,982 Rohingya refugees by June 2003. Since the first repatriation had taken place on September 22, 1992, many times the They have been deprived of their right to nationality and are

repatriation went into a stall, mainly due to noncooperation on the part of Burmese authorities.

The refugees are, no doubt, homesick, although they often raised the question of the security of their life, property and dignity upon their return to their homeland. The news is heartening for a refugee, because he could return home, no matter whether or

not there is any trace of his Rohingya: A decade of denial house now, a place of his birth, where he played with fellow friends, grew, prayed and is a place with the graves of many of his relatives

On the other hand, he is filled with fear and frustration to be repatriated to a torture-land. Because the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) has not the least sense of human rights and is a regime characterised by brutality. There is no

Nation awaits PM's lead

Thank you for yet another quality editorial (June15). I too have written on a number of occasions, on similar issues in your esteemed daily and would like to reaffirm a few aspects of the several issues raised in the editorial.

Separation of the Judiciary from the Executive: I am in full agreement with you when you refer to the matter as a "planned delay". Frankly the law- makers take us as fools. The government would do itself a favour should it act on the matter without loosing any further time. My hunch is that this government like all its predecessors seriously lacks in foresight and political wisdom to be

able to act on such issues. Downsizing of the cabinet: It is long overdue. I find absolutely no reason for the PM to be dragging her feet on the matter. The PM could embark on the task by first removing the controversial ones who not only have performed poorly but also brought disgrace upon the country and the party itself. From here onwards the downsizing could take place in phases. This would also give the PM an opportunity to assess public reaction to the matter for herself including party cadres. I find it absolutely incomprehensible that a handful of individuals could be above party interests and the nation at large

The fiscal measures of our venerable Finance Minister, taken so far are technically correct and do make sense and are reflective of a spirit of nationalism. But on his part, I am afraid I still find them to be somewhat over-ambitious and difficult to implement. The proposals would have been ideal under a utopian state of good governance and accountability on the part of our administration. With the government's failure to provide basic services, I foresee limited response by the taxpayers resulting in tangible ennancement of our internal revenue. The level of trust between the incumbent government and the people is at its lowest ever. On the other hand the Minister is racing away too fast with multifarious measures, which are creating a kind of confusion and even suspicion amongst general members of the public.



Where can I go? I do not want to be a refugee anymore. I just want to live in peace."

ernment of Bangladesh. United Nations and international community to this genuine concerns of the refugees with an appeal to find a just and durable solution to the Rohingya problem, so as to be able to continue their living in their own homeland of Arakan peacefully and honourably with all human dignity and rights.

to leave their homeland and become refugees in Bangladesh.

Persecution of Rohingya refugeesare continuing unabated.

Md. Sadek Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar

has been used. I don't know whether English language has any word like

Abedin New York, USA The word 'cheater' is not oft used but exists in the English language.

Please see 'The Random House College Dictionary (Revised edition) 1988 - Fditor

Reconditioned car. new car and environment

Much has been said about by various quarters in support of withdrawal of ban on re-conditioned car as proposed in the budget. It seems the Finance Minister is not prepared to listen to any of the argument. This is very unfortunate and definitely not expected of him. Surely, he must have listened to "New car dealers' before proposing the ban. Why is he not prepared to listen to the "victims", comprising the dealers and the general public (as consumers)

alike. I wonder. The logic of re-conditioned car being 'bad for environment' is just not on. I would like the concerned ministry to perform a practical test of a new Toyota and a newly imported re-conditioned Toyota of the same model to prove Finance Minister's argument. Cars between 10 to 15 years old are being happily plying in streets of European countries,

what's wrong in Bangladesh? One may ask. As for price difference? A reconditioned Toyota car is 45-50 per cent cheaper than its counterpart model new car and without any environmental damage. This may not sound a lot of money for the affluent, but it's a fortune for the low to middle income group consumers. Please also do not try to prove that a new Maruti is as comfortable to drive benefits continued. Last week, Hasina said they would join parliament session in the interest of people. There is no relation between their joining JS and people's interest. She should not fool the nation She could see people's interest. while she was in power, by avoiding

frequent travel to foreign countries with large entourages which cost this poor nation's state exchequer Tk 63 crore

they announced not to join the parliament session the nation really got surprised. That time former president Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed commented that they (AL) would join parliament just before they were about to loose their parliament membership due to absence from parliament for more than 90 working days.

Well, once they join parliament session, hope they would not find an excuse to desert the Parliament

Shameem Akhter Oregon, USA

Behaviour of BNP andAL

I read three letters with the heading "hostage to hartal culture forever!" and another letter with "parliament boycott culture". I share the frustrations of the writers. In the prevailing circumstances AL could make their points better if they attend the parliament but their leaders think the otherwise

with Banaladeshi organisations.

Everybody wants to win. This

I feel sad that the two parties are behaving in the same way though they have originated from two different circumstances. AL was born in late '40s and has experienced Language Movement, fought against religious autocracy of Muslim League, fought against martial law and led the War of Independence. On the other hand BNP was born in the Cantonment for the benefit of a General. AL is 25 years older than BNP. More maturity is expected from AL. but in reality any difference between the two parties. What is the reason behind this?

anything and by doing so encourage the leaders to do whatever they like or in some circumstances passively and blindly support one of the leaders and remain in their shadows. We blame the leaders when things go wrong as if we have no responsibilities at all.

draw the attention of the Gov-

Let's try to remember what the great philosopher Machiaveli said. He said that leaders couldn't behave badly if they have to lead good people.

There are many intelligent and well meaning people in Bangladesh. I hope some good advise will come from them, which will be the way forward for our nation. We have been blaming AL and

BNP for a long time. This has not taken us anywhere. We badly need something more constructive.

Waheed Nabi Sheffield, England Khaleda Zia consol-

ing!

In your back page (June 17) I see the

Plight of a retired person

The LPR persons get the full-pay for six months and then halfpay for the next six months. But what happens thereafter, when a government servant after 35 years of service is suddenly deprived of his monthly wage because he is no more on LPR and his retired life has begun. In simple words it is a torture of the highest degree. An honest person who is totally depended on his salary has no alternative but to spend his meagre savings or sell his family property to survive. What guarantee the government gives to its "obedient savants" against starvation and poverty.

The pension money is a rightful claim. But in practice, the sanction of 12 months' salary and pension has become so complicated an issue that the process takes years. From my personal experience I know that during this period the retired person becomes a target of criticism in the eyes of his family and rela-

I, therefore, strongly suggest that the half-pay should continue till the finalisation of the pension case and the 12 months leave salary should be sanctioned straightway to the person within his LPR period. The half- pay during the pre-pension period could be adjusted from the pension and if in some rare cases it is not

for calling hartal on June 16. People their own fate instead of the poor of this city have become utterly The recent media coverage of the exasperated, suffocated and tax evasion of some NGO personalities and personal use of fund, if depressed due to all sorts of polluanything, is only a tip of the iceberg. tion. A great many of them, just like me, would sure welcome a hartal Although many people like myself regardless of its negative impacts, will be interested in a total disclosure just for being able to enjoy a reasonof corruption or improper deviation ably placid atmosphere at least for a of donors' fund by the NGOs, we few hours. Mind you readers, a little also realise a full scale investigation noiseless, exhaustless respite in a into such powerful and influential hellhole like Dhaka should positively syndicate can neither be launched nor possible. Lack of honest and uncompromising dedicated officers Well, at least I value these pre cious hours like anything and feel as to do the job is certainly a factor but more often it is the political wheeling if am living in some serene abode and dealing that keeps any serious away from this perennial trouble ridden squalid city. If you are talking investigation into major white or blue

be deemed as a divine bliss.

or the Opposition?

June 16th

his daughter?

Dhaka

in terms of national losses during the

hartal, hey who you think cares

about this anyway, the government

seems to be functioning in this

'democratic' country now, a land of

Don't you find it ironic that on the

anniversary of Bangbandhu's

attempt at setting up a one party

dictatorship we are held hostage by

Given the way AL behaved in the

last government it would appear that

Sheikh Hasina never learnt why

people turned against her father. I

used to ask people, my driver, my

parents what went through their

minds when Bangabandhu was

assassinated. Most often the

answer was they were scared, didn't

know what was going to happen

next. Another view I also heard, the

Sheikh was being misled and didn't

also misled and doesn't realise the

blunder she's making. She should

reflect on her father's mistakes

In response to BRAC's reply to Col

Sharif Habibur Rahman (14 June) I

would like to start my letter with a

local contemporary proverb. "What

do bureaucrats do after they retire?

before repeating them.

"Tax the NGOs"

Bastiat

Dhaka

If I am to be charitable. Hasina is

realise the mistake he was making.

'Hirak Raia'? Hence hail hartal!

Shah Mushtaque Ahmed

Hartal or no hartal, what at all

colour crimes in abeyance. The fact that concerns most is the extra-judicial power of NGOs. There are incidents that NGOs took away whatever bare utilities the poor borrowers owned due to their failure to repay, no legal course was taken. no court order obtained, simply a reminder of Shakespeare's Shylock. I do not condone the act of default but certainly all things must be done within a legal framework. It is not a healthy society where the people

feel that NGOs are above law. The other issue that is also a concern is the hypocrisy of NGOs in their so-called campaign for the elimination of child labour. Take this for an example. A poor fellow gets a rickshaw van from an NGO under an agreement that he would repay the loan in monthly instalments. The income in his rural area is not enough and the poor fellow can not drive more than one shift because of inherent malnutrition. The earning is hardly adequate to feed the family and at the same time repay the loan. Eventually he sends his school going son to pull the van in alternate shifts and his wife and daughters to work in a project funded by the same NGO.

One should also consider the fact that Bangladesh Bank rules do not permit a charity organisation to secure a license to become a scheduled bank. An NGO Bank was thus refused approval too but law is a gift for the rich and powerful and a stick for the poor. The names that shine the corridors of the higher courts made it happen for the NGO Bank. NGOs by nature are supposed to

be charity organisations with the objective to serve the poor. Well I do

adjustable, it should be added to the recoverable amount. I hope the PM would consider the matter and act accordingly.

Mohammed Alauddin Dhaka



Whom to vote in the next election?

DHAKA WEDNESDAY JUNE 19, 2002



Should we vote at all?

I would not call myself either a BNP or AL supporter. Although I voted for BNP in the last elections, it was only because I mistakenly thought that BNP had learnt its lesson and might try harder this time. I was also worried that another term with AL would take their obsession with Bangabandhu to greater heights ending up with his portrait tattooed on my face.

Now our two faced Leader of the Opposition shut down the country again. Just like she did the last time. The threat is quite clear; if she's not in power then she will destroy Bangladesh.

Now with the gun to our head what are we to think? Should we fold and let Hasina back in or do we keep propping up the doddering Khaleda Zia and her Hawa Bhaban gang? Honestly Ershad was much better than these two. At least he had style. I think I might like to have him back if he promises not to make us sing that horrible "notun Bangladesh" song.

Peter Dhaka

The government will distribute 25,00 computers to the educational institutions in the next (it is a drop in the ocean). The total demand is huge (in millions for ten years); and like garments, we can produce it cheaper than the import cost (even in CKD condition). There are many non-hi-tech components in each computer, which the local industry can handle. A feasibility study is

overdue. Now clones are being assembled n small scale by some Bangladeshi firms. There is no announcement yet of setting up PC and component/accessories factories in IT village (for export also). A poor

aid in Bangladesh It is widely perceived that Bangladesh is heavily dependent on foreign aid. Bangladesh received foreign grant of 2,929 crore taka and foreign loan of 5,993 crore taka in FY 2000-01 where the total budget for the government was 39.647 crore taka for the period. It means that only 7% of our budget is foreign donation, and 15% percent is for-

puter science can learn anything

without touching the computer.

However, the senior teachers are

very good and punctual. It's mostly

expect is that our wards would

becomes an efficient citizen after

passing from these institutes. Is it

The utility of foreign

too much to ask for?

A citizen

Dhaka

As a quardian the least we can

the amateur ones that are at fault.

eign loan Most of the foreign donations are used in providing us technical assistance. A very high percentage (sometimes as high as 90%) of the budget of technical assistance projects is used as consultancy fees. These types of projects employ very highly paid international consultants, who take more than 2/3 of the consultancy fees. The rest one-third is paid to the local consultants who are recruited from the top-level bureaucracy (secretary/additional secretary) in most cases.

The salary of the local consultants is also very high compared to the market. It is in the range of 80,000 to 150,000 taka per month. It is very lucrative for the government officials who get a monthly salary of around 15,000 taka per month. The government officials are recruited as local consultants usually after their retirement. It becomes a very lucrative pension scheme for them.

After last October election when

Shamsher Chowdhury California, USA

"Cheaters"

Please note that your daily is quite respected and widely read by the Bangalee readers as well as others. In your editorial of June 15 (Nation awaits PM's lead"), a word 'cheaters'

"Vulgarity in the Sports Page"

This is in regards to the letter by that spoilsport Mahmud (June 16) complaining about vulgarity in the Sports Page. I disagree with him on several counts. I happen to like the Sports Page just the way it is. As a matter of fact I want a supplement only on the female fans.

The practice of printing photographs of well-endowed women during the World Cup, especially Brazilians, is an international one. So much so, that I found the same picture printed in The Daily Star last week of a Brazilian fan in the Internet, other magazines and even the Economist, which doesn't even have a sports section

Pictures of fans actually have a far greater innocence than some of that other stuff pasted on the streets. If you want offensive, then see what your cable provider shows at 2 am.

Let's just keep the Sports Page as it is adding more spice if possible.

MA

Dhaka

I see, Mr. Mahmud deprecating the sport section of The Daily Star on account of vulgar publications. As I am a regular customer of the concerned section of the daily was quite awed by the view of the writer. I would not try to establish my definition or scale of vulgarism here cause I do have respect for an individual's wishes and values. But what I am concerned is the feeling of uneasiness; discomfort and innate sense of humiliation that one goes through carrying a mind heavily silted.

Is there not a way around other than try to renounce the publications and suffocate even more? Did we ever ask ourselves what causing our mind to think those are vulgar publications? Isn't that our minds that are fragmented and suffers duality? An honest indepth search to the inner-self perhaps would open a world where lies the necessity of inner individual revolution, a journey to the pilgrimage.

Once we gather the courage to see ourselves not with the intention to change radically but to understand how the modern technological society has came this far and what effects it laid on us in the process, would help us to find different taste of life. Therefore with a brand new pair of eyes everything is so beautiful even the socalled vulgarity on the daily would be sharable with our kids.

or ride on as a re-conditioned Toyota. Because it is not. I hail the budget in all aspect

except for re-conditioned car a bit. I do hope good sense will prevail and the proposed restrictions will be withdrawn. This will make the proposed budget 'the best budget' since 1995

M N Alam Moghbazar, Dhaka

In the interest of

attitude hampers the organisapeople? tions' image. But the leaders are We knew Sheikh Hasina and her AL not bothered. But what about the MPs would join Parliament, at least. general people? to retain their Red Passports and get We the so-called ordinary people their monthly allowances and other either don't show any interest in

typical photograph of another politi-I have seen many small cian, in this case the PM, consoling Bangladeshi organisations functhe mother of another victim. tioning at home and abroad. I I'm tired of these pictures. It was have noticed that the leaders of

BNP men whose rivalry resulted in these organisations never accept the death at BUET. defeat. If there is a competition, It's too much to hope that Sheikh naturally one will win and the other Hasina and Khaleda Zia will restrain will lose. But that does not happen

themselves but at least I can hope The Daily Star stops printing these pictures.

Beowulf Dhaka

Hail hartal! Thanks to the 'patriotic' politicians

They either start a private university

or an NGO" BRAC has indeed been a pioneer in micro-credit program in Bangladesh and has set an example for the world to follow suit. Winning the prestigious Magasasay Award bears the testimony to their contribution to the uplifting of the fate of the poor in the country.

I personally do not know the number of NGOs presently functioning in the country but do know that the number who follow the same path with dedication is indeed a very few. Most have indulged in uplifting

if they want to start commercial enterprises. Please do so by all means but do not hide behind the charity umbrella to deprive the government and the people its due share of revenue that is due on commercial ventures. Otherwise it will spark off the dangerous precedent of double standards.

Khandaker R Zaman

Winter's tale

Mass production of

not think anyone will have a problem man's PC may be researched, planned and manufactured for sale in the LDCs (why not compete?). We are giving away the local market on a plate to foreign entrepreneurs. The ICT Division of the GoB may generate some noises.

A Mawaz Dhaka

Recruiting teachers

This refers to a report of June 10. While addressing a gathering of academics, the Education Minister declared that 2500 teachers will be recruited initially in government colleges, and another 1500 posts will be filled in gradually.

Shortage of college teachers occurred nearly two decades ago when a political agenda of nationalising private colleges was taken. This caused a huge drainage of public exchequer, but at the same time the quality of education suffered immensely, and this is continuing till date.

Probably the existing Public Service Commission will hardly be able to make a satisfactory and timely recruitment of the 2500 teachers.

So we suggest to form a special Public Service Commission for a limited period only, to cope with the huge recruitment of college teachers. To maintain the quality of a particular service, there has to be an even flow of recruitment each vear.

S. Mahtab

Dhaka

About private

universities My sibling studies in a well-known private university of Dhaka. In their institute, the former students are employed as lecturers. If these lecturers can guide the students it's fine but these amateur teachers are neither good at teaching nor are they punctual.

These poor students wait for the teachers who may come hours later or may not simply come at all. What would the students learn from these teachers?

The practical classes seem to be held just for its own sake. I don't understand how a student of com-

This creates a corrupt competition among the top ranking civil servants to get a consultancy after their retirements. They play as agents of different local and foreign consultancy firms to design and approve technical assistance projects. Here the bigger danger starts. The technical assistance projects that reforms and restructures the government mechanism are largely devised to ensure a lucrative and expensive pension scheme of the

The health sector is a good example of it. A massive organisational changes were introduced in the health sector development projects in the name of HPSP (Health and Population Sector Programme) because of the interest of then Health Secretary (I refrain from mentioning his name) and the then Prime Minister which resulted a total collapse of the family planning activities. The failure of HPSP and

top bureaucrats.

its impact had widely been covered in the local newspapers.

I request the readers to think seriously about the real need and utilisation of foreign aids and loans and device mechanism to get rid of

Dalia Satar On e-mail

TV Guide

In vour TV Guide under BTV it says "Group F Champion vs. Group A runner-up". Why not take the trouble to write Sweden vs. Senegal? It's the little niggling things that

matter. A small effort wouldn't hurt. Don Quixote Dhaka

June 14th had two very immodest photographs-- an Argentine and a Brazilian fan in a flimsy dress expressing their jubilation. These pics fit better in a "swim suit" magazine or in a evening tabloid. To see such immodest photos in a respectable daily is rather shock-

I hope in future you would remember the cultural and moral background of your readers before printing such photos.

M Rafique Uddin, Ph.D. Jaintiapur, Sylhet

Sporting pictures!



Zaiami Bodrudduza On e-mail

This refers to the letter by Mr. Mahmud (June 16). I would like to disagree with his view that "vulgar" pictures are often published in The Daily Star Sports Page. However, I found some pictures in very " poor taste". In general, I like the style and humour of this page. But I believe that The Daily Star should exercise more discretion regarding printing of pictures. The readers of this daily are sophisticated; they don't look for cheap entertainment when they turn on to the Sports Page.

Pictures, which adorn this page everyday, are collected from reputed news agencies. Other newspapers are publishing the same pictures. Nevertheless, majority of readers will find pictures of skimpily clad women in the gallery unacceptable. Also the picture of one damsel throwing flying kiss at the players on the pitch draws the reader's interest from sports to somewhere else.

Frequent publication of pictures like those indicate use of women as commodity. Being a strong proponent of women's rights, should not The Daily Star refrain from publishing pictures that provide cheap entertainment only?

Ahmed Zamil MBA, IBA

I enjoy reading The Daily Star. It is doing an excellent job in covering World Cup Football tournament. However, your Sports Page of ing for a Bangladeshi reader.

Pcs