

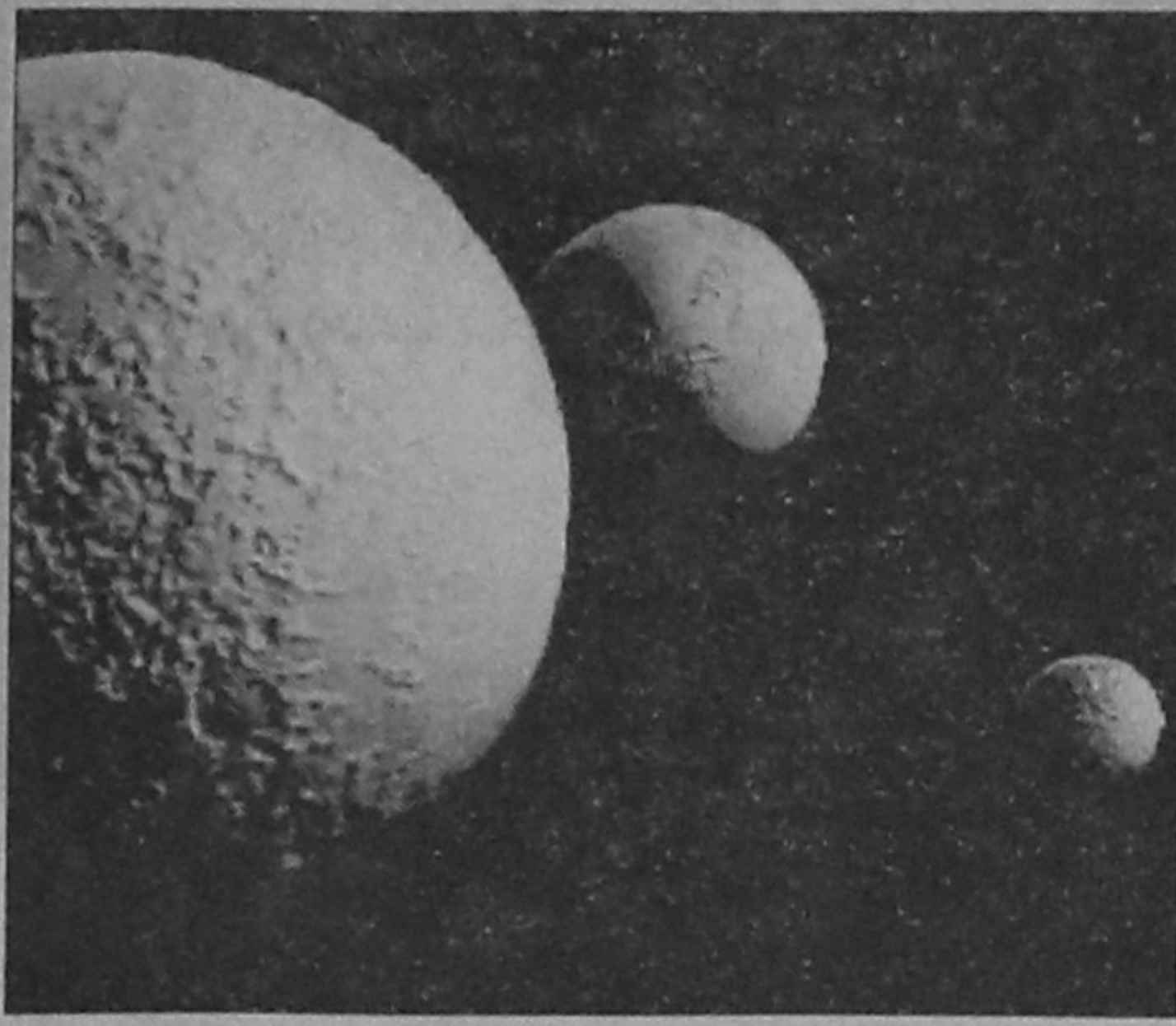
Human beings will rule the universe

Pasadena Jet Propulsion Laboratory has reported that a new planet has been discovered in the far distant corner of the universe, which is only 41 light years away from us.

Man, as a creature, is in many ways a wonderful animal. In the vast expanse of this mostly uncharted universe, despite their very limited shape, power and intelligence, have showed their amazing creative energy.

We sometimes lose hope in us due to some temporary debacles, but we should really be proud of ourselves. Human energy is limitless in various ways.

Akbar Hussain Toronto, Canada



The Universe belongs to us!

Want exemplary punishment of AC Akram

AC Akram has been given life sentence. But do we need a killer in our society? Why should we feed a criminal like him for the rest of his life?

Shawkat Dhaka

Vulgarity in the Sports Page

This is with respect to the ongoing debate regarding vulgarity on the Sports Page. In fact the Sports Page is printing what is actually happening in the field and watched by billions of viewers worldwide.

Bastiat Dhaka

I don't know if we bought the Pajeros for the police with our own money but I do seem to recall that the new police motorcycles were bought with ADB assistance.

Last night I also saw one of our pathetic ambulances vainly trying to get through the traffic in Tejgaon with its wailing siren struggling to be heard above the clamour of scooters and horns.

Bastiat Dhaka

Both sides of the story

It refers to Mr. Nasir's letter "Hasina is consoling a journalist" (June 10). It said that during the last 5-years AL treated the journalists with the most undemocratic manner.

Previously we read reports on AL leaders such as Joyal Hazari and Shamim Osman. And now we have

Islamic terrorists

This is a response to Mr. Khan's letter regarding Islamic terrorist. I agree with him. Those of Kashmir and Palestine are indeed freedom fighters.

The Kashmiri people want an independent state and the Palestinians want an end of Israeli occupation. But the problem is that they are fighting for freedom in a wrong way.

Sameer Ahmed Khan Mojlish Dharmadandi, Dhaka

RAJUK in deep slumber

It is really heartening to note that the Ministry of Energy after getting a lead from The Daily Star news is trying to clean up the Titas Gas Co.

foreign exchange on foreign pilots. And such type of accidents would discourage others to enter this profession.

Jabed Sylhet

Dhaka's future bus system

One problem that will not be addressed by buses (any size) is the extremely convenient, door-to-door service provided by rickshaws and baby-taxis.

My suggestions:

- (1) Major cities in the world do not allow all forms of transports to travel along all the roads, e.g., highways are restricted to cars, buses, etc.

Khan Zahid Riyadh Bank, Saudi Arabia

National budget and kiwifruits

I don't have an economics background. So, I admit that I do not have the knowledge necessary to understand national budget.



Budget: Fruits of frustration

some kind of fruit from New Zealand. I have never seen it and I don't know who are the consumers of this fruit in Bangladesh and what is their number?

Wait a minute! I think now I understand the budget. It's all there in the Finance Minister's comment as quoted in The Daily Star (June 8):

Neaz Al Rahman Dhaka

the whole family while our wives most enthusiastically and even untiringly have been very kind to serve snacks and tea and sharing us the joys and agony of defeat.

Syed Feroze Ahmed Baridhara, Dhaka

This is in regards to the letters on the issue of The Daily Star Sports page printing vulgar photographs of football fans (June 19).

Please allow me to make a little prediction. In the upcoming quarter finals Korea will beat Spain and later in the semi finals fall to Germany.

My point is since Brazil will lose to England on Friday I would really appreciate it if The Daily Star Sports page would do a commemorative issue on Saturday as a touching farewell to all the Brazilian fans we won't be seeing for another four years.

Beowulf Dhaka

Ministers' jumbo motorcades

No sooner do the police get their nice new motorcycles that they are commandeered by Ministers for their motorcades. Last night on the way home I saw this twice and again this morning.

reports on VP Joyal and Nasiruddin Pintu. The scenario is mostly unchanged except for some faces. After the October election we have seen violence probably at its highest rate.

Mr. Nasir blamed AL for disclosing internal quarrels to foreign dignitaries. According to him AL should have been quiet about the ongoing violence.

I don't support the terrorist activities committed by AL leaders during their regime. BNP leaders and many blind BNP supporters will always speak of AL's misrule. But the misrule of the past government does not give the present one a license to terrorise the country.

Jabed Sylhet

"David fights Goliath"

This is in reference to M. Ahmed June 8 ("David fights Goliath"). I would like to inform Ahmed about his misconception of Pakistan's strength.

Your statement is not acceptable, as you have said India can wipe out Pakistan. Well Pakistan can also wipe out India. If you look at India's nuclear weapons they have only one ballistic missile (Prithvi) with a low range of 150km.

India's nuclear weapons are of low range of 10kilo tons while Pakistan's are of 20kilo tons, more than the bomb, which had been thrown to Hiroshima by America (that was 14kilo tons). So just imagine who can wipe out whom.

Faisal Moghbazar, Dhaka

the Editor on RAJUK could not get the concerned ministry awoken from their deep slumber!

It is believed that many files are pending in RAJUK since long for want of grease.

Would the Prime Minister take necessary steps with special reference to: a) Pending cases/files and their disposals. Public may be requested to register cases to special cell of the concerned ministry, to be opened.

Bari One-mail

BTTB and Alcatel

We already know who the beneficiary of the Korean Frigate scam was although the government tried to excise the name of their latest recruit from the White Paper.

Now I see this article on the ongoing controversy with Alcatel. Which politically connected person benefited from this deal? Must be someone really powerful since neither AL nor BNP has touched him.

Tintin Dhaka

Death of a pilot

A Cessna-150 training aircraft crashed in Uttara and the pilot Sakib died on the spot. The young man joined Air Parabat Flying Academy to become a pilot.

The country has shortage of pilots. We spend a huge amount of

Transparency International's (TI) claim as Bangladesh being the most corrupt country.

So where is our solace and comfort? Whatever might be the negative sides of the West, there at least a person could live with honesty and dignity.

J Kobir Marpur, Dhaka

Iron foot-over bridge

The foot-over bridge accidents killing three people shocked the entire nation. To prevent such accidents the government decided to stop constructing all the under-construction concrete over bridges.

Now what should be the alternative to concrete over bridges? I think the use of iron bars for the purpose is a good option.

The former AL government constructed many iron foot-over bridges, which are in good shape till date. Everything of the past government is not bad!

MAS Molla BAAS, Dhaka

South Asia's nuclear arsenal threatens actually outsiders

I am writing with reference to "Why didn't New Delhi launch the war," by Harun ur Rashid (June 19).

Canada's most veteran South Asia correspondent, John Stackhouse, recently wrote the most telling account about the nuclear confrontation between India and Pakistan.

In fact, there was no danger of nuclear war or even a full-scale conventional war between India and Pakistan. India's sabre-rattling in response to terrorist attacks in Kashmir was basically directed towards the domestic audience where militant Hindu nationalists were calling for retaliation.

While India might have pacified the domestic audience, the real threat of the South Asian tiny nuclear stockpile may be directed to outside. With terrorists trying to acquire nuclear devices for terrorist attacks on the West, especially America, theft and even deliberate transfer of such nuclear materials cannot be ruled out.

Where are the city planners in Dhaka? Who is at the drivers' seat? Manbil One-mail

"Values and morality"

This is in response to Akbar Hussain's letter "values and morality" (June 17). What has been depicted in the letter, is the cry of the human soul throughout the ages of civilization and nothing new.

But are we, who live in Bangladesh, altogether free from contradictions and agonies, when in every sector corruption is reaching sky high?

Not only that a handful of honest people who are still ailing the old lamp of honesty and sincerity are continuously cornered and neglected.

South Asian rivals.

Mahmood Elahi "About private universities"

This is in response to the letter "About private universities" (June 19). The writer said that his sibling is studying in a well-known private university where the teachers are the former students of the university.

The writer also said that such teachers are usually not punctual and cannot teach well. Well, for his kind information, there are several DU professors who are taking a number of classes at different private universities and I wonder how they manage to give time to DU students.

About the practical classes which the writer said are not very effective since students of computer science are taught without the opportunity to use computer. Well, I'd say that the particular private university where his sibling studies (and which he boasted as a well-known private university) is not at all up to the standard.

Canada's most veteran South Asia correspondent, John Stackhouse, recently wrote the most telling account about the nuclear confrontation between India and Pakistan.

For the sixteen qualifiers of the second round, if we give one point for each correct prediction and half point for being partly right (i.e. group runners-up instead of being champions and vice versa) then we end up with Star Sport achieving less than 50 per cent! And for the last eight teams, i.e. the quarter-finalists, the Star Sport only got three teams right-- success rate of less than 40 per cent!

A Distressed Observer Chittagong

sities just because his sibling is suffering the consequence of reading in a below-standard private university.

Mohammed Naved Ferdous Iqbal The University of Asia Pacific, Dhaka

"Compensation suit against FEER"

It was a long awaited and heartening news published in your daily and broadcast in BBC Bengali News. At last, Mr. Amir Ali Hawladar has done it, which demands praise and appreciation for his sense of patriotism and protest against wrong and injustice.

When our country's image is deliberately distorted and wrongly focussed with fallacy and falsehood: "Beware of Bangladesh" "Cocoon of Terror" on front page cover of "FEER" (4th April, 2002), the compensation claim should have been much higher.

Mustafizur Rahman Dharmadandi, Dhaka

Reshuffle the cabinet

How many days or months you will it

take to reshuffle the cabinet? The performances of some of the ministers is far from satisfactory. Rather they are flop ministers. Still the PM is not removing them.

We fail to understand why is she taking so much time to reshuffle the cabinet, which is overdue? Moreover, the overall situation of the country is not very good. If the PM cannot take the right decision at the right moment then definitely the people will lose confidence on this government.

One learned person from the West has said, "It does little harm if a general makes a mistake in the battlefield. But if a leader makes a mistake then it will do much more harm to the country and its people."

Iqbal Ahmed Dhaka

Political culture in Bangladesh

As we suffered much to establish democracy, we should protect it at any cost. And though it's a responsibility of the entire nation, the two major parties the ruling and the opposition, must play the major role in this regard.

In the parliamentary system the role of the opposition is very important. Its constructive criticism helps the government to rule the country smoothly. And the absence of the opposition in the parliament is a

Surprisingly, she failed to show me not only the Intellectuals Series stamp but also the stamps about our Liberation War. She asked me to come again later and I did so last week. But the authority informed me that they were out of print.

I did not expect such a reply from the largest post office of Bangladesh.

Shamim Ansary Sumon Dhaka

Poor leadership

BNP is in leadership truancy and the PM is personally responsible for this pathetic state of affairs. She has to become tough and unpopular. The loss of sense of direction is dismaying. Where is the current of leadership?

There are too many storms from the Hawa Bhaban. There are too many junior ministers and the front organisations are interfering too much. The chain of command is diluted to the level of ineffectiveness. Sharing of power does not mean sharing of the top seats, but adequate recognition in the background, base, and policy making level. The marginal issues can take care of itself if the flow from the centre is right.

BNP have governed before, but its current performance looks amateurish, due to internal system losses. This too in an atmosphere of very weak opposition and blessed with the rarity of enjoying an overall majority.

This is the time for a wholesale shake-up as international issues come closer and regional agendas get hotter, to set the course right for the next four years.

A Mawaz Dhaka

Good initiative

I highly appreciate the government's decision to ban polybags. Indeed it's a very good initiative from the present government. But I'm disappointed (not surprised) that the opposition didn't even acknowledge it for about congratulating BNP for such bold and positive initiative.

Dhaka city was going nowhere with the hazardous polythene bags, which was polluting the environment, and making it difficult for the city dwellers to carry on with normal life. I am hoping for the day when there would be no longer the nuisance of polythene bags loitering everywhere in the country. I thank those who are involved in this scheme and I hope the scheme works effectively.

Anilla Alim Dhaka

New budget

The new budget has imposed taxes on many essential commodities like milk, sugar, soybean etc. So, people with limited incomes will suffer more. On the contrary, price of coloured TV and air conditioner will go down. Who are the consumers of these goods? Of course those who are well off. The Finance Minister is being too considerate to the rich and too harsh to the poor. If the government needs more money from revenue, taxes on luxury goods should have been increased, not the everyday necessities. But the budget put the pressure on the poor.

Previously a person earning less than Tk 100,000 per year was not under the tax belt. But now anyone with a yearly income exceeding Tk 75,000 will have to pay income tax. The lowest amount of income tax has also been increased from Tk 1000 to Tk 2,400. But a person earning Tk 10,000 will have to pay 1,58,750 taka, which is 49,000 less than the previous tax rate. So it is clear that this budget is specially designed for the rich so that they can buy air conditioners at a cheaper rate. And the common people are left with all the taxes and VATs.

Jabed Sylhet

Next time don't predict!

In this World Cup we are seeing upset after upset. Now, how do the predictions of Star Sport stand among the ruins?

For the sixteen qualifiers of the second round, if we give one point for each correct prediction and half point for being partly right (i.e. group runners-up instead of being champions and vice versa) then we end up with Star Sport achieving less than 50 per cent! And for the last eight teams, i.e. the quarter-finalists, the Star Sport only got three teams right-- success rate of less than 40 per cent!

A Distressed Observer Chittagong

creating much hindrance to the path of democracy. They have boycotted the JS accusing the environment in the parliament is not suitable. But is it not irrational to say so before even joining the JS?

Abdus Salam Mymensingh Central Jail

One question

One day a woman with her two children came to beg at our house. She was about 25-28 years old. So my mother asked her why was she, being quiet young and strong, was begging. She replied that with two little children no one wants to provide her a job, and her husband had left her about two years ago. Then I asked her whether she gets any alimony or maintenance from her husband or not. She replied in the negative. I advised her to go to the court but she denied saying she could not afford it.

Is there any institution that helps women with such problems?

Md Ahsan Kabir Rajshahi

Philatelic Bureau of GPO

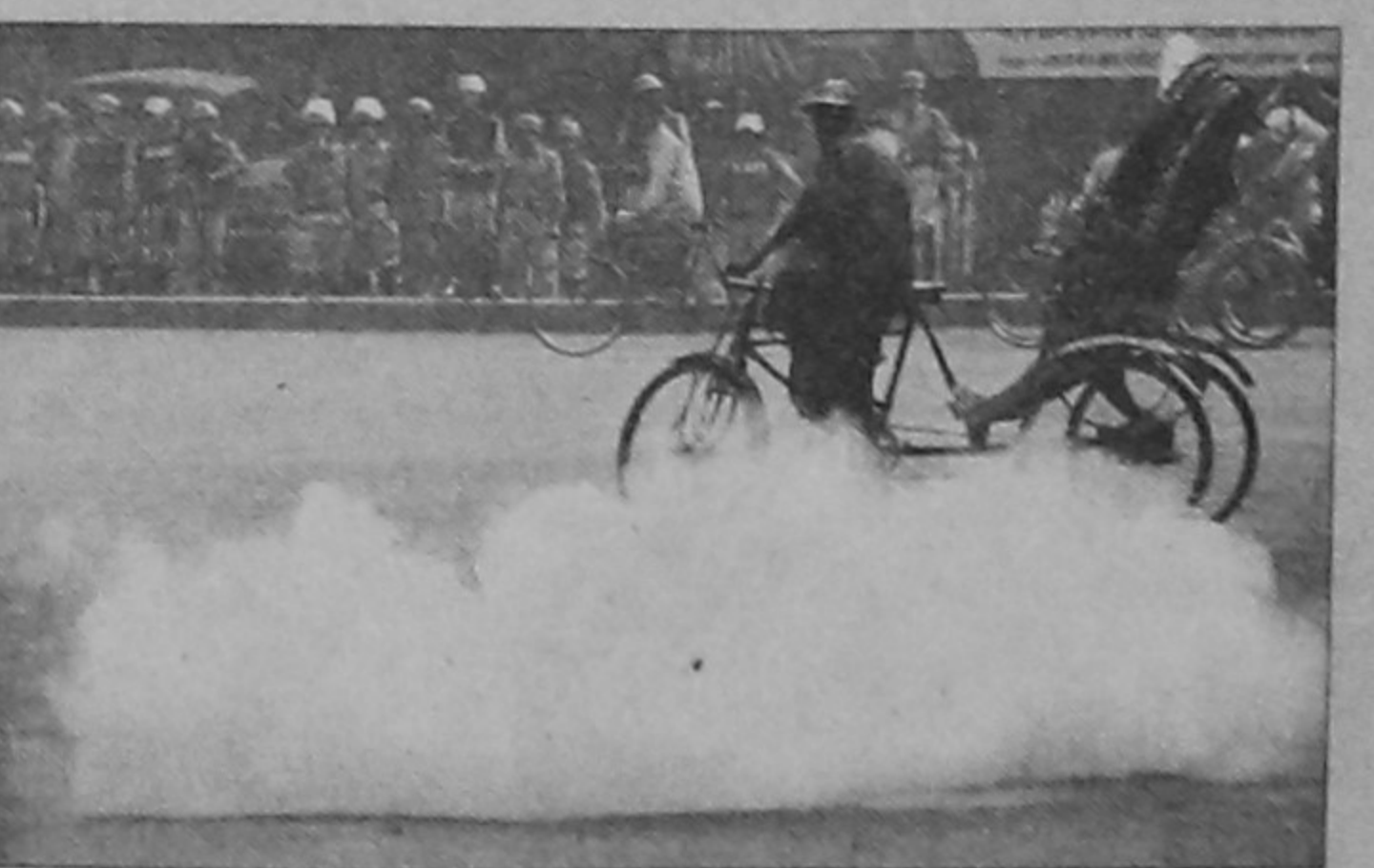
I went to visit the Philatelic Bureau of Dhaka GPO a few months ago. I was impressed to watch the enormous number of postal stamps of our country; all of those were just for demonstrating. My actual intention was to purchase some stamps. I informed the staff what I wanted.

"Hostage to hartal forever!"

While I was reading your online version of 17 June, I stumbled across a letter by Arani Siddiqi "Hostage to hartal forever!" There the writer shamelessly and ignorantly praised the state run BTV for broadcasting a documentary. The documentary was based upon some promises the opposition leader had previously made while she was in power.

Let us look at this from different angles. BTV-- our state-run television has been over-praising each and every government ever since its birth. The reputation of this media has gotten so bad now a days that even the pro-government people watch the news of the private channels. Some even go as far as watching BBC!

From another perspective let us look at the circumstances under which the opposition leader was forced to make a comment as such. At that time BNP, an opposition then, was calling frequent and unnecessary "hartals" from day one making life absolutely miserable. Sheikh Hasina had no other choice but to make a statement as such simply so that the opposition would come to their senses. Of course that did not help. But this was just a technique she was forced to use to bring some unruly and out-



Hartals: Journey to confusion

of track trouble makers. It is true that our political leaders are not true to their words. But showing a documentary as to what the opposition leader had said earlier while broadcasting a world cup match holds no significance what so ever. Just like water and oil never mix, sports and politics also don't go together. This was yet another example of our "Beaukoof Television" playing a dirty game. And people like Arani Siddiqi have more time to take up unnecessary newspaper space as well.

Masroor Ahmed Deepak, Ontario, Canada