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. I was trying to fathom in my imagination how far is this 41 light years? Then I submitted to the limitations of my human humbleness.

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. From the prehistoric man to this day, the human race have come a long way to prove that their creative energy have surpassed their small shape. We have ventured into the void of the universe, we have crossed the roaring oceans and we have scaled the highest mountains on earth. But these achievements were not easy. At times human ignorance was our greatest enemy. Human knowledge has enormous possibili-

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. I can say that till such time another species is discovered some where, we will rule the universe.

Akbar Hussain Toronto, Canada

Want exemplary punishment of ACAkram

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? Wouldn't it have been more exem-

s plary to hang AC Akram till death particularly when abuse of law and atrocities of law enforcer is the order of the day?

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. As rightly said The Daily Star goes to a selected class and I personally believe that the religious, social, moral standing of that class is not that weak.

for and against have one thing in It said that during the last 5-years AL common which is they are true, treated the journalists with the most lovers of The Daily Star as such I undemocratic manner. I agree with recommend that let us respect the him. But what the present governindividuals' sentiments as we are all ment is doing? Do you think they are fellow readers of the daily and stop any better? this discussion. This one month of festivity has reached deep into our leaders such as Joynal Hazari and homes and we are having fun with Shamim Osman. And now we have

I don't have an economics back-

ground. So, I admit that I do not

have the knowledge necessary to

understand national budget. Still I

ventured through the tons of words

and maze of tables that appeared in

the newspaper as the budget

speech of the Finance Minister.

And I think I have discovered some-

thing important: price of kiwifruits

will go down and price of milk pow-

der will increase. Only I am not so

sure that I understand it correctly.

Why on earth should the budget

raise the price of milk and dairy

days specially to have a little devia-

This is in regards to the letters on the

issue of The Daily Star Sports page

printing vulgar photographs of

prediction. In the upcoming quarter

finals Korea will beat Spain and later

in the semi finals fall to Germany. In

the other matches Senegal will beat

Turkey and then go on to lose to

England in the semis. Yes that's right;

England will win the semi finals

leading up to a World Cup final

My point is since Brazil will lose to

England on Friday I would really

page would do a commemorative

issue on Saturday as a touching

farewell to all the Brazilian fans we

Please allow me to make a little

tion in this stressful world.

Syed Feroze Ahmed

Baridhara, Dhaka

football fans (June 19).

against Germany.

desh suffer from malnutrition? Then again what

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. I wonder if our development partners knew that giving Bangladesh new police vehicles simply means they'll be dragooned into the jumbo cabi-

net's jumbo motorcades. Last night I also saw one of our pathetic ambulances vainly trying to get through the traffic in Tejgaon with its weedy siren struggling to be heard above the clamour of scooters and horns. None of the cars or buses bothered much about letting it through; I even saw a government Pajero trying to overtake it. Our priorities seem to be that ministers commute to their homes is more urgent than getting patients to our hospitals that the PM shuns for

Bastiat Dhaka

National budget and kiwifruits

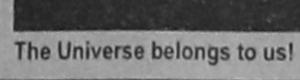
products while most of the children of Bangla- ple and clear!

is Kiwifruits? From its name I guess it may be Dhaka

Both sides of the story

It refers to Mr. Nasir's letter "Hasina What I find is the fact that all those is consoling a journalist!" (June 10).

Previously we read reports on AL



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. If any one says that because of being freedom fighters, they are terrorists then we were also terrorists once.

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. Killing innocent people isn't the through dialogues and if they fail to get their inalienable rights, they should go for a decisive fight against those who are curbing their freedom rather than a reckless fight. But I also think that satisfying the legal demands of the Palestinians and the Kashmiri people (giving them freedom) is the ultimate solution to all problems.

Sameer Ahmed Khan Mojlish Dhanmondi, 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. 1 am rather astonished to see that a number of news items and letters to

some kind of fruit from New Zea-

land. I have never seen it and I don't

know who are the consumers of

this fruit in Bangladesh and what is

their number? But, one thing is sure

that these consumers are not poor.

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):

Budget is an exercise to take one

class and give it to the others. This is

basically politics of social conflict."

So, take from the milk powder and

give it to the kiwifruits. It's so sim-

from their deep slumber!

move in RAJUK!

enceto:

the concerned ministry awaken

It is believed that many files are

Unless money is paid no files

Would the Prime Minister take

necessary steps with special refer-

a) Pending cases/files and their

concerned ministry, to be opened.

b) Enquiry on applications submit-

ted by our foreign exchange earners

from abroad for land allotments

paying hard currency, and action

We already know who the benefi-

ciary of the Korean Frigate scam was

although the government tried to

excise the name of their latest recruit

Now I see this article on the ongo-

ing controversy with Alcatel. Which

politically connected person bene-

fited from this deal? Must be some-

one really powerful since neither AL

nor BNP has touched him. Who

whether fair or unfair.

BTTB and Alcatel

from the White Paper.

One-mail

could it be?

Dhaka

pending in RAJUK since long for

foreign exchange on foreign pilots. And such type of accidents would discourage others to enter this profession. The government should investigate this accident properly to prevent further accidents.

Sylhet

Dhaka's future bussystem

One problem that will not be didn't New Delhi launched the war," addressed by buses (any size) is the by Harun ur Rashid (June 19). extremely convenient, door-to-door proper way to attain freedom. It is service provided by rickshaws and correspondent, John Stackhouse, time that these freedom-loving baby-taxis. People are so used to it recently wrote the most telling people settled their problems and this is why these vehicles keep coming back and remain widely tation between India and Pakistan. used. Any solution, I believe should He rightly dismissed out of hand any include such personal door-to-door possibility of nuclear exchange component. Thus, we have to find a between these two old rivals. He way to combine large efficient wrote in Toronto's Globe and Mail: "I impersonal modes like buses, etc. am dismayed by the media's reacwith rickshaws, mopeds, scooters, tion to the latest tensions in Kash-

My suggestions: (1) Many major cities in the world do thrown around lightly... The (largely not allow all forms to transports to white) Western media seems to travel along all the roads, e.g., high- believe that India and Pakistan ways are restricted to cars, buses, cannot be trusted with nuclear etc. (not motorcycles), buses are weapons. Somehow, we tend to restricted to single lanes, and etc. In believe these two countries behave Dhaka, they should extend the differently-irrationally-to-the same system they have implemented on set of circumstances that so many Mymensingh Road to the whole city. nuclear-armed militaries face regu-"Major thoroughfares" should not larly. When Israel sends thousands allow any rickshaws, scooters, or of troops into West Bank, we don't pedestrians... only cars, buses, taxis, suggest that it might drop a nuclear trucks, etc. At the same time bomb on Jenin or on a country that "feeder" or "secondary" roads supports Islamic Jehad. When Ruscrossing the major thoroughfares sia and Iran have a dispute over should be allowed only for rick- something like the Caspian Sea, we shaws, scooters, bicycles, and other- don't suggest they could be a hairdoor-to-door transport mediums. triggered away from the unthink-Thus, essentially, for short or able. It's only the irresponsible medium distance trips, people can South Asians we think will destroy take these door-to-door mediums themselves." (they will just find the routes to cross major thoroughfares, without going on them). And, for long-distance

travels, people can take the mechanised mediums like bus, taxi etc. (2) Ban the polluting autorickshaws. Instead of it, the government should remove duty on very small cars and allow people to import them and run them as taxis. Allow other things like mopeds, pedicabs, etc. to ply the feeder roads. (3) For major thoroughfares, close them off in such a way (i.e., limit access) so that only allowed transports can enter and ply them. Ensure it through heavy fines and confisca-

Khan Zahid

Riyad Bank, Saudi Arabia

tion of license, rickshaw, etc.

In my opinion the mass-transit traffic problem in the Dhaka city would be cut by at least one third if we moved the garments factories (and the wholesale districts) to the outskirts of the city around the ring roads. That way export and commercial traffic wouldn't have to come even near the city. This proposal has been floated so many times yet no one pays heed in the CityCorporation.

Beijing has now eight ring highways (not roads) connected by Los Angeles style highway interchange flyovers. All businesses (manufacturing and wholesale) are planned to be on the sides of the highways like

This is in response to Akbar Hussain's letter "values and morality" (June17). What has been depicted in the letter, is the cry of the human soul throughout the ages of civilization and nothing new. Human civilisation, is inseparably linked with migration and the con-

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

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

According to the recently pub-

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

. 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 Mirpur, Dhaka

corrupt country.

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 underconstruction concrete over bridges. The decision is well taken.

Now what should be the alternative to concrete over bridges? I think the use of iron bars for the purpose is a good option. Iron bridges can easily be removed if found hazardous and the cost of construction may also be less than the concrete ones.

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

MASMolla BAAS, Dhaka

South Asia's nuclear arsenal threatens actually outsiders

I am writing with reference to "Why

Canada's most veteran South Asia account about the nuclear confronmir. South Asia, brink and Armageddon are not the words that should be

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. Indian leaders knew very well that by attacking Pakistan, they will make a bad situation worse. They are likely to play into the hands of the extremists in Kashmir, who will benefit from any military confrontation. A completely defeated Pakistan would only enrage the entire population and India might face a larger guerrilla war at its doorstep.

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 be ruled out. And if the military confrontation over Kashmir continues, the opportunity will exists for the terrorist to lay hands on these nuclear warheads. This should be the greater worry than the so-called nuclear exchange between two South Asian rivals.

Mahmood Elahi Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

"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. Well, I don't think there's anything wrong with that. The fact that former students of the university hired as faculty to uphold the confidence of the education standard of that particular institute. Besides, even post-graduate students of DU are often hired as faculty of DU.

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

the particular private university IS. where his sibling studies (and which he boasted as a well-known private role of the opposition is very imporuniversity) is not at all up to the tant. Its constructive criticism helps standard. So, there's just no justifi- the government to rule the country cation to draw such irresponsible smoothly. And the absence of the conclusion about all private univer- opposition in the parliament is a

In this World Cup we are

seeing upset after upset.

Now, how do the predictions

of Star Sport stand among

For the sixteen qualifiers

of the second round, if we

give one point for each cor-

rect prediction and half

point for being partly right

(i.e. group runners-up

instead of being champions

up with Star Sport achieving

rate of less than 40 per cent!

sities just because his sibling is

suffering the consequence of read-

Mohammed Naved Ferdaus Iqbal

"Compensation suit

against FEER"

The University of Asia Pacific, Dhaka

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 appre-

ciation for his sense of patriotism

and protest against wrong and

injustice. But the compensation

claim of US \$ 2,000 Million is on the

low side as against such blatant lies,

fabricated and sinister publication

When our country's image is

deliberately distorted and wrongly

focussed with fallacy and falsehood:

"Beware of Bangladesh" "Cocoon of

Terrors" on front page cover of

"FEER" (4th April, 2002), the com-

pensation claim should have been

appreciate the stand of Mr. Amir Ali

Hawladar in his noble efforts. It is

better if our Govt. immediately

lodges further complaints and cases

in various forums including national

and international legal bodies.

Reshuffle the cabinet

How many days or months you will it

Mustafizur Rahman

Dhanmondi, Dhaka

I feel that our government may

against our motherland.

much higher.

A Distressed Observer

Chittagong

university.

paper not to predict, not even for fun!

and vice versa) then we end

the ruins?

Next time don't predict!

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 are taught without the opportunity that every problem (national and to use computer. Well, I'd say that international) will be solved in the

In the parliamentary system the

League

creating much hindrance to the path

of democracy. They have boycotted

the parliament is not suitable. But is

it not irrational to say so before even

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 pro-

vide 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

women with such problems?

Philatelic Bureau

I went to visit the Philatelic Bureau

of Dhaka GPO a few months ago. I

was impressed to watch the enor-

mous number of postal stamps of

our country; all of those were just for

demonstrating. My actual intention

Is there any institution that helps

could not afford it.

Md Ahsan Kabir

Rajshahi

of GPO

Perils of prediction

Abdus Salam

Mymensingh Central Jail

Onequestion

less than 50 per cent! And for the last eight teams, i.e. the quar-

ter-finalists, the Star Sport only got three teams right - success

So, for the next World Cup we would advise our favourite news-

ing in a below-standard private the JS accusing the environment in

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.

Poor leadership

Dhaka

Shamim Ansary Sumon

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 leader-

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 back-About the practical classes which major parties the ruling and the ground, base, and policy making the writer said are not very effective opposition, must play the major role level. The marginal issues can take since students of computer science in this regard. The people expect 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

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.

AMawaz 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 forget 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

Newbudget

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

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.

was to purchase some stamps. I Jabed informed the staff what I wanted. Sylhet

attacks on the West, especially America, theft and even deliberate transfer of such nuclear materials cannot

in the USA.

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

"Values and morality"

flict of cultural changes.

neglected.

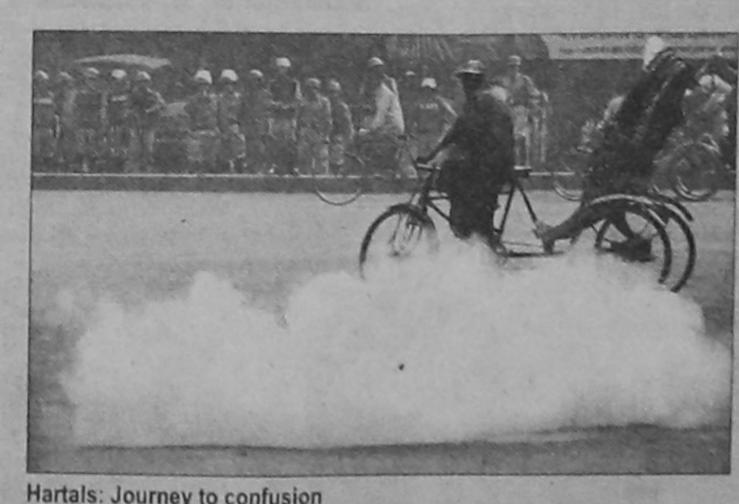
lished World Bank--UNDP reports on corruption and mismanagement of our public sectors, it has been revealed that wastage is to the tune of 40% -- which corroborate the

"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. Sheikh Hasina at that time said, and I recall the incident quite vividly as it received praises from all quarters, that if a situation arose when her party was in the opposition even then she would refrain from calling "hartals". A big improvement indeed if those words could be followed. But according to Mr Siddiqui the opposition leader had lied, gone back on her words and called for strikes even though she had promised not to.

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! This merely proves that BTV has lost its credibility as a neutral broadcasting agency.

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 "Bewakoof Television" playing a dirty game. And people like Arani Siddiqui have more time to take up unnecessary newspaper space as well.

Masroor Ahmed Deepak, Ontario, Canada

Beowulf Dhaka

Ministers' jumbo motorcades

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. Once in Kawran Bazar where the Minister had two of the new motorcycles as outriders and again in Kemal Ataturk where a Ministerial Nissan Patrol (GHA 02-2415) sped through rush hour traffic sirens wailing and lights flashing escorted by one of the new police Pajeros that we seem to have

won't be seeing for another four

No sooner do the police get their bought.

the whole family while our wives reports on VP Joynal and Nasiruddin the Editor on RAJUK could not get most enthusiastically and even Pintu. The scenario is mostly untiringly have been very kind to unchanged except for some faces. serve snacks and tea and sharing us
After the October election we have the joys and agony of defeat. Let us seen violence probably at its highest have fun for the remaining couple of rate. I will never forget the tragic want of grease. story of Mahima. The 15-year-old girl who was raped because her father worked for the AL during the last election.

Budget: Fruits of frustration

Neaz Al Rahman

Mr. Nasir blamed AL for disclosing internal quarrels to foreign dignitaries. According to him AL disposals. Public may be requested should have been quiet about the to register cases to special cell of the ongoing violence. Surprisingly, he did not mention anything of BNP government's failure to control

I don't support the terrorist activities committed by AL leaders taken by the last government, 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.

appreciate it if The Daily Star Sports 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, while Pakistan has two ballistic missile with a range of 2000km (Shaheen/Ghauri).

India's nuclear weapons are of

low range of 10kilo tons while Paki-

stan'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 Maghbazar, 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. I feel sorry for Sakib and his family. Such deaths are always painful. Two trainee pilots died in a similar crash four years ago. And it was the same Parabat Flying Academy.

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