It is obvious that Zionism is the

sole beneficiary of the lone

superpower structure of the world.

America and the Zionist are

entangled in a deadly embrace. Can

they be separated for the sake of

humanity? When will we understand

that greed is not good? Be it for

other people's land in Palestine or

for the extra billion in the accounting

It was another blow to our decaying

faith on the social security in

Bangladesh to read the brutal killing

of a gentle teenager at Barisal. I

lived in Barisal for more than a

decade and witnessed the gradual-

deteriorating situation and now

the situation is worse than ever

Galib, whom I personally knew

was one of the most gentle and

polite boys. He lived a peaceful life

in harmony with friends and

neighbours and never heard about

any of his association with unsocial

activities, politics, drugs etc. So far.

no body knows the motive of this

It is scaring too to believe that a boy

can be killed in an area like

polytechnic campus, which is

believed to be a secure area. Those

who committed this kind of crime

must be brought to justice and

should not be protected by any

shadow godfather. If our society

allows this kind of killing to go

unpunished, we must be prepared

to dig the grave of our innocent

children and later, it will not matter

who is who but all of us will feel

unprotected.

merciless killing of an innocent boy.

sleight of pen at Wall Street.

Galib's death and

our society

Mohamed

working in the population field, the

Well I did care when I found that

various well meaning organisations

apparently sponsored by the UN

thought fit to hold a noisy procession

Moakhali was totally blocked by this

redundant display of UN profligacy.

Tell me something, did the UN block

the rush hour traffic in Manhattan to

hold their procession, marching

about with a horrible band and

trucks with loudspeakers disturbing

the peace? Do you know UN defines

LDC's or third world countries? It's

those countries where the UN can

block traffic at rush hour and impede

the smooth functioning of its

Every now and then we come

across news of torture in police

detention. In this connection we

may recall the incident in Kapasia

where a 22-year-old college student

and an Awami League activist was

mercilessly tortured in police

This heinous incident proves the

utmost human rights violation and

inhuman police atrocity prevailing in

Bangladesh. Though this

unfortunate young man had no

criminal background he had to

undergo such brutal torture only

because he was an AL activist.

That's not all. Finally he was killed in

examples, which reveals the

extreme frustrating state of our

country. In a democracy, all the

citizens should enjoy equal rights

and no one can touch even any

the police have all the rights to

detain, torture and even murder any

one and everyone except for the

on why don't we declare

Bangladesh as a police state

We have seen the demise of

UNOCAL

Unocal: Saying no to compensa-

instead of a democratic one?

Greed is not good

Mahammad A. Siddique

If this is the case then from now

ruling party people.

New York, USA

There are plenty of similar

the river while trying to escape.

commerce with impunity.

Police brutality

TAli

custody.

The traffic from Bijoy Sharani to

Ministries, NGOs and the UN.

## "A limousine parked at the graveyard"

This is in regards to Afsan Chowdhury's emotional column today about the disparity of wealth and the unfairness of life. The column touches upon several points some of which I agree with but not all of them are correct.

I agree, sometimes I find the degree of disparity of income in Bangladesh slightly repulsive. But this disparity should be kept in perspective. Latin America has the highest degree of income disparity in the world not Bangladesh. The rich in India live like lords with huge country homes, yachts, vintage cars and palatial town houses. One of my long-standing complaints about Dhaka, at the risk of sounding insensitive, was what to do with money? We have no night-clubs, no shopping malls worth visiting, no cinemas, no polo, no yachting; in short we are missing all those things that the rich in other countries enjoy.

I was at the launching ceremony for Mercedes and I agree with Mr. Chowdhury quite a few of the people there were loan defaulters and crooked politicians. The guest of honour was the only man who can afford a Mercedes 500. That is what is wrong with our country. But keep in mind that all the businessmen are not the robber barons, Square, Transcom and a few others have a generally clean reputation.

The issue is not that there are rich men who can afford expensive cars. Having rich men is GOOD. I am not rich by any means and I cannot afford a Mercedes, but I consider myself a public servant. In the pursuit of my own Mercedes. I am creating wealth in a hundred different ways. This is the essential beauty of the capitalist system. which took P J O'Rourke in "Eat the Rich" a round the world trip to figure out. The customs official who harasses me and whom I bribe is the semiotic of all that is wrong in our

cadres in the ,70s in front of Sharif Mia's tea stall in DU campus, or when he heard the groans of the dare devils who wanted to 'sew the lips' of the BAKSAL-opposing teachers in DU teachers room, or his deep 'pain' while running with life through Race Course ground with other fellow students as he enunciated in his articles. These are all written parroting the style of "Gonzo Journalism" of Hunter Thompson, or those of Tom Wolfe or Joan Didion (Literary Journalism), minus their artistic skill or devoid of brazen 'politics'

We know Mr. Chowdhury very seldom saw any problem in the country during "75-'81, if not '75-'90 period. I request Mr. Chowdhury to address the poor freedom fighters as, at least, 'freedom fighters', or members of the Mukti Bahini, not as "Muktis" he frequently does. It may hurt some people, may not hurt "some" of his readers.

### **Ahmed Hasan** New York, USA

Afsan Chowdhury's response: I have reported facts and will continue to do so. I am not in the popularity winning business or propping up any party or groups. If you have read my column "Are AL and BNP the same party?" (June 18) you would not raised this point. As for using the word "Muktis", I suggest you visit Bangladesh, go to a village and ask the villagers what they used to and still call the Freedom Fighters (Muktis). As for my style of writing is concerned, vour comments were not clear either to my colleagues or me so I can't respond though I'm sure you meant something nice.

### Fate of ETV

Lappreciate your balanced editorial on HC's latest decision on ETV, though I found your firm attitude towards the existence of ETV a bit slacker than what I observed in the

# **Corruption of Anti-Corruption**

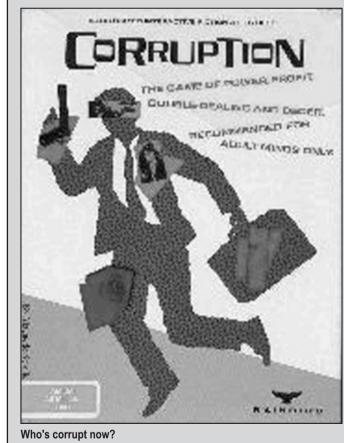
I would like to request you to cover more on the corruption of Bureau of Anti-Corruption. I read the news " Not out of love...' (July 9). I was really surprised and angry to read the report. The story reveals the real picture of our country.

As a nation we have become really corrupt. You have an institution to check others, now we learn that the head of that organisation is corrupt from head to toe. What an irony!

Earlier, I have heard about corruption in BAC, but could not believe it. After all you have to have faith in some of our institutions. But after reading your report I know that what I've heard is true.

Please print more such stories of corruption in public organisations. Zahid

Dhaka



country. That customs official will make lakhs of taka in each posting and then invest the money in flats in Gulshan. But were I to be spared this tax, I would have continued on my merry way to making more money for myself, which I would invest again and again in the pursuit of a Mercedes 500.

The pursuit of wealth within a framework of the rule of law and with the minimal of governmental interference would remove poverty, end hunger and make us as rich as the Koreans, Poverty in Bangladesh is an artificial creation brought about by rapacious politicians, meddling experts and NGOs and a decline of what used to be respectable people.

Kireti Dhaka

This letter refers to the column "A limousine parked at the graveyard" by Afsan Chowdhury. We always leaf through Mr. Chowdhury's articles with great attention to understand what he wants to say with his alphabets and between the lines as well. Sometimes he goes too caustic about the people who don't deserve that indecent innuendo or oblique reference. Mr. Chowdhurv's favourite subject is to castigate Awami League with bitter puns-- it's there when he witnessed a student being dragged and tortured inhumanly by some BCL

earlier editorial on the same issue.

I also share the same respect for law. But isn't law for people's good? Isn't it law's duty to ensure people's right to information? Is law something detached from the wellbeing of the commoner? If this is not so, if man is not destined to the protection of law, why don't you propose the court to consider a popular referendum? Before banning ETV, the country's first world-class TV channel, we have the right to know if people really wanted its tragic end.

Mainuddin Mainul Mohammadpur, Dhaka

ETV is now walking on a thin line. The Supreme Court has given its verdict and the channel has only five weeks left. Then what happens? The channel is shut down!

We do agree that gross irregularities, violation of rules occurred during the issuance of license of ETV and the ETV authorities need to pay for it. But while ensuring rule of law we should consider some other aspects as

The popularity of this channel among the viewers cannot be ignored. ETV's programs especially news presentations and reporting has brought a new dimension in our

television broadcasting. And what those who have been

## Perks for Mps

Thanks to the Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina for her important role in resisting the introduction of four bills to raise remuneration and privileges for the PM, the Speaker, the Ministers and the MPs. I could not understand why did the government make such move to introduce such irrational bills?

The Finance Minister enlarged the tax net in the current budget. There should be accountability in spending the taxpayer's money. There is an alarming increase in killing, kidnapping, rapping and extort ion activities throughout the nation. People are facing the worst law and order situation.

Unfortunately, the government's performance is not at the satisfactory level in improving it. We have no objection, if the government raises their remuneration and privileges after improving the socio-economic condition of the common people.

Due to constructive Opposition role, the people's interest is being protected by withdrawing the irrational bills in the JS. I hope the Opposition will never boycott the JS for the greater interest of the people.

M. S. Uddin Nagoya, Japan

Bravo to Sheikh Hasina. I think her shooting down of the insidious ploy to squeeze more money out of the mammary of our shriven

coffers was a brilliant patriotic act. I am so happy she didn't even walk out yesterday. I happened to glance at the perks BNP was awarding itself. Most meant little to me and even less to our masters. Do you really think a deputy junior state minister really cares how much his house rent allowance is? Of course not; he's making millions in influence peddling and corruption as it is. The additional money would only have gone to pay for their assistant PA's tea and cigarette bills. The only perk, losing which surely hurt, was the extra jeep. How

troubles, this is a familiar if dreary

political tactic, used in Asia by the

late Philippine President Ferdinand

Marcos and Malaysia's PM

magazine, "Thaksin got elected by

selling his vision of Thailand as a

tightly run business - and by making

populist promises. His contradictory

statements about the Thai Airways

jet explosion in March and the

treasure hunt hoax in April made

him look inept at best. Questions

remain over whether he can deliver

on his promises, which some

economists say would bust the

budget. And he still faces trial on

charges of falsely declaring his

assets; if found guilty, he could be

Time Magazine had this to say

about Anwar's visionary leader. "To

many the Prime Minister looked like

a sucker. An editorial in The Nation

labelled him the subject of

"international ridicule." Some

suggest Thaksin's goal was to

distract attention from his ongoing

trial at the Constitutional Court for

allegedly burying some of his own

treasure by filing a false assets

declaration when he was Deputy

Prime Minister. Or maybe he was

hoping Chaowarin could help pay

for the pots of gold he promised

voters in order to get elected. To be

sure, Thaksin's credibility is in

Seminars, seminars

Almost everyday I come across

reports in your daily about seminars

poverty alleviation, economy and

finance, child abuse, law and order

situation, etc. Invariably it is the

same set of thinkers, intellectuals

and economists who turn up as

guest speakers in these seminars

and deliver their opinions and

suggestions. Obviously these

seminars cost money and do not

come free. May be at times these

seminars are organised by donor

Do the opinions expressed in

these seminars reach the eyes and

ears of our Prime Minister, ministers

and the department concerned? Are

any resolution passed in these

seminars sent to relevant

government department and

followed up? Or is it all going into

opinion that the general public,

irrespective of their political

affiliations, want peace, justice,

better law and order situation and

rapid economic development. If

these set of thinkers, intellectuals,

and economists who attend

seminars could come out into the

open and hold public meeting in

places like Paltan Maidan and

express their opinion on maladies

ruining our country, perhaps

thousands of us would have joined

these meetings and send a note of

As a common citizen I am of the

countries.

held on subjects like human rights,

and seminars

thrown out of office.'

According to Asia Week

Mahathir Mohammed"

working in ETV? Have we ever thought of them? These employees would be jobless overnight if the channel really shuts down.

Mahima Rahman Dhaka

When we people were sick and tired of the state-run boring BTV and dving for neutral news ETV came to our rescue. In a very short period of time the channel established itself as a major source of entertainment but most importantly created a revolution in news broadcasting.

And now due to an unwanted battle of legality of its terrestrial transmission the channel is going to be shut down!

Isn't there any way to save ETV? Can't the ETV authority be penalised any other way? We definitely want rule of law to establish but we also want ETV to continue its broadcasting for the sake of the nation and its people.

Mariam Parveen Rajshahi

Why are some people so anxious to save ETV? Don't these people have

any respect for rule of law? The way people are mourning over ETV, it seems that it is the only TV channel of Bangladesh and if it is shut down we would be back to the dark age. But that's not the case. Except for BTV, which I'm sure no body is interested in, there are other channels, which broadcast quality programmes including news.

Hope every one has learnt a lesson from the Supreme Court verdict that nobody can escape from the hands of law

**Mridul Molla** Shantinagar, Dhaka

## Armchair struggle

Your July 11 issue carried an impassioned plea ("The only way forward on Palestine) by Junaid Ahmed on the need to fight US foreign policy and help Palestinians and all other suffering people.

I commend the author's passion and sense of righteousness. Should I assume, therefore, that he will be shortly leaving the comfortable environs of leafy Virginia suburbs and head over to the West Bank to lend a helping hand for some charity like the PLO's Red Crescent or some hospital?

Sarcasm aside, I highly doubt anything like that will happen. Criticising the United States and Israel from cushy armchairs propped in nice homes in the American suburb is a traditional pastime of many bleeding heart liberals. There are plenty of Palestinian professors, businessmen, and professionals in the United States who moan and cry

for their own state. Yet, not one of them has ever admitted, and I know quite a few of them, that were a PLO state to be created, they would pack up and move to the Gaza Strip permanently. And if such Palestinians do not care so much about a future Palestine, why should

Such conscience and patriotism is only as deep as the comfort and convenience of the American suburb.

Missouri, USA

## Chittagong to **Chiang Mai**

Do you really want to build this highway connecting us directly to the infamous Golden Triangle? By some accounts there are about thirty rebel groups fighting in Burma and you want a stable land link to that?

M Anwarul Haq says "Thaksin is considered one of the most dynamic and visionary Asian leaders". Sentences such as these in a paper like The Daily Star are not acceptable to me.

The Asian Wall Street Journal has accused Thaksin of "deflecting attention away from his own



The House of perks

the minister's must have wanted that extra jeep! It's a Bangladeshi proclivity, we like big jeeps, some sort of compensation for a lack of endowment I suppose.

Then the opposition skewers the Acting Speaker over the PM's unannounced absence from Parliament. Nasim even pointed out that the Thai PM is away and our Madam could have attended the session. I don't like Nasim but any opposition in parliament is better than none

Kishore Pasha Dhaka

concern to the politicians and bureaucrats

Ziauddin Ahmed Gulshan Dhaka

## Ataturk a great leader?

Seminars do not console us any

I have gone through both the letters of Ms Farah Islam and Mr N Alam (July 10) penned from different perspectives. I appreciate about Ms Islam's advice to think, question and

Ms Islam clearly manifests what she preaches, by skirting if not totally scuttling the age old third world syndrome of hero worshipping and also a skilful Western initiated indoctrination propaganda of how effectively Islam bashing succeeded in Turkey, during the Ataturk rein.

As far as my personal views are concerned, till I can physically visit Turkey, I shall confine it between the aforesaid opposing perspectives, even irrespective of "Kamal Tu Nay kemal Kiya Bhai".

R K Putool Chittagong

## Generation next

Many parents have become really scared to see the so-called western influence on their children. And it is quite natural to be anxious when your children 'dance away' their characters in those so-called "privileged" clubs?

I strongly believe in these privilege clubs, they indulge in premarital sex and drugs. parents are terrified as their children spend weekends away from home. If foreign channels are to be banned because of their negative influences so should these clubs.

We are all trying to create a clean and healthy Bangladesh for the younger generation. Therefore we must strive to establish the atmosphere of a Muslim-oriented Asian country. I request the government and the citizens to help us in this by bringing up strong measures to combat these activities and provide healthy and traditional entertainment for our youth.

Mrs. Khan Gulshan, Dhaka

## No step yet to ban student politics

Many innocent students have been victims of student politics. Hall capture-recapture, extortion, tenerbaazi has taken many lives and ruined many more. Yet our leaders have not taken any steps to ban this violent politics. All the suffering students, teachers and even their guardians have kept quite. But why? Do we need more dead bodies to wake from slumber? Or it is because the politicians' selfish interest will be hampered if student politics is banned?

Reaz Notre Dame College, Dhaka

## "Political dynasty"

Sheikh Hasina is absolutely right.

comment on BNP and Tereq Rahman is also right. If Tareg's appointment is not a sign of dynasty then what is it?

## Bangladeshi entrepreneurs and

Murshed Siddiqui

In response to Ms. Shameem Akhter's letter "Political dynasty", I

We are dependent on India, both geo-politically and socioeconomically and there needs to be an awareness among public that such dependency cannot and should not be sustained for a long

In order to achieve any economic goals that we may have, our policy

It is common knowledge that

big multinational companies

always exploit a situation to the

fullest when operating their

business in third world

countries. And with money-

hungry, corrupt and unpatriotic

politicians (which Bangladesh

has in loads) the platform of the

MNCs becomes too good for

dictating their terms of the

the headlines screamed

'Unocal refuses to pay blowout

compensation' (5 July).

Shaukat Islam

Dr. Shahriar Hasan

Pennsylvania, USA

Indian goods. There should be

some clear-cut policy of gradually

phasing out import of Indian

Great nations never prospered

commodities and cultural products.

**World Population Day** 

Did you know that July 11 is the

World Population Day? Did you

care? Not me! I suppose the only

people who care are the ones

Dhaka

So I was not surprised when

environmental and other damages!

Unocal must compensate!

If the blowout had taken place in any Western country,

I was quite taken aback by Unocal's coloured ad (DS, 07

My appreciation goes out for Petrobangla, Bapex and other

authorities, who in spite of fighting odds have remained steady

on their stand of compensation. Our PM must not take this

issue lightly and the same goes for the Opposition Leader as

well. In order to save people's and the country's interest,

July) boasting about their working in partnership with nations,

just two days after their refusal to pay. What an irony!

Unocal must compensate as per norms of the trade.

Unocal would now be settling claims in billions of dollars for

would like say that her comment on However, I also feel that Hasina's

# Indian trade practices

### criminals while they are in police Dr. Hameem I. Kawsar Ibaraki, Japan custody. But in our so-called democratic country it appears very much the otherwise. It seems that

Pakistan" - I disagree It is hard to remain silent at your 'educated' reader's remark about the new law in Pakistan: presidential office for no more than two terms and minimum university degree for presidential candidates.

"I like the new law in

The first law can do miracle to a country like ours - I totally agree. But barring non-university degree holders from the parliament is a bit elitist. If democracy is about representation then it is only fair that uneducated people have the right to be represented by someone who also shares their struggles and aspirations, but not forced being represented by someone who were taught about their needs in college. Even though big part of the population is illiterate, we regularly hear comments of this sort from many 'distinguished gentlemen' of

Bangladesh. Perhaps we should modify our parliamentary affairs to make it more inclusive. Adopt technological provisions such as the use of videotaping in addition to written transcription to document the not produce leadership, not yet. Mohammad (PUB), Abraham Lincoln, and John Major are all successful leaders without a college

Hopefully our education system will produce people who are educated as well as enlightened not just the arrogant ones devoid of logic.

Shuvo Rahman Gulshan, Dhaka

## Preserving our architectural heritage

Some recent feature programs on local TV channels have enabled us to watch many of our great architectural sites and relics that would have been otherwise difficult. due to their remoteness and poor accessibility.

These programs also revealed the sad state of dereliction of these architectural treasures, with no wellplanned scheme to preserve them for our posterity. We know the country has other pressing needs at present, and that fund is limited, but these are vital elements of our culture and heritage, and define who we are, and what our past is. Preserving them should be a national priority. If we don't do it now, then by the time we hopefully become a more solvent nation, it may be too late, as they may have become totally dilapidated beyond recognition. There would be no way to bring them back by any time machine

Besides their cultural significance, maintaining and preserving these sites is also imperative from a practical standpoint. They have great tourist potential and can be a good source of revenue if tapped properly. Such revenue can also in turn help defray the preservation costs of them as well. If we can spend money to preserve other heritages like our language and folk literature through Bangla Academy and other institutions, then why can't we do the same for these important part of our heritage, which after all, cannot be reprinted like books?

Lulu Ahmad Dhanmandi. Dhaka

## "New budget for middle-income family"

I found several letters written against the opinion of Mr./Mrs. SBS of Mymensingh ("New budget for a middle-income family, July 9).

One of them also mentioned about the middle-class mentality that they are always against the government decision. I would like to say that, whenever a government makes any changes to budget or take any other steps like increasing electric bill, water bill etc. the group mostly suffers is the middle-class society.

Every year in the name of the so-called system losses crores of taka are theft by tampering electric meters or other ways with the help of the



Whose budget is it anyway?

meter readers. I resided more than a decade in Dhanmondi area and I have seen that many persons are involved in such kind of stealing. On the other hand the government is

not taking any significant steps to stop this illegal business. Instead the government finds an easy step to raise the fund by increasing the bill every year, the honest middle-class people who has the only source of money is the fixed monthly salary becomes the easy target for this. After a change in the

budget, a house owner can increase monthly house rent, a businessman can increase prices of products, a poor rickshawpuller can increase the fair, but what else a service man can do? Only to cut things from his daily life.

Japan

makers must be able to warn people communism. Well, not completely about the dangers of love towards but the spirit of it. The ghost of communism is still present in Central Asia and in the other pockets of the so-called Third World. Now we are witnessing the folly of secular capitalism. The being dependent on other's unbridled greed of post Soviet era products. Let the silent revolution seen a period of time where a super power is supporting a mentality where nothing can stand in the way of an American capitalist and the next dollar he wants to acquire. We have heard about the virtue of capitalism and we also heard that the triumph of capitalism was the natural consequence of human progression. But what really nappened during the last ten years? Only one country became prosperous, at least on papers.

Internet boom is gone. Accounting scandal is in. The whole world experienced a stagnant or declining economy except for those who are in good terms with that lone superpower. Muslim countries are in real bad shape. Not that they need any outside enemy still whatever they do that must pass the litmus test of not annoying the Jews lobby of Washington. And that lobby and their friends in American politics can fabricate Muslim threat everywhere and make believe the Americans anything they want

The bottom line was that the direction of world was not good for the most of the world. There must be a better way, a middle way where human freedom is cherished but not at the cost of other fellow human beings. We know what the middle road is, don't we? The main problem is that there is no practical model to show us that middle road in this present day world.