

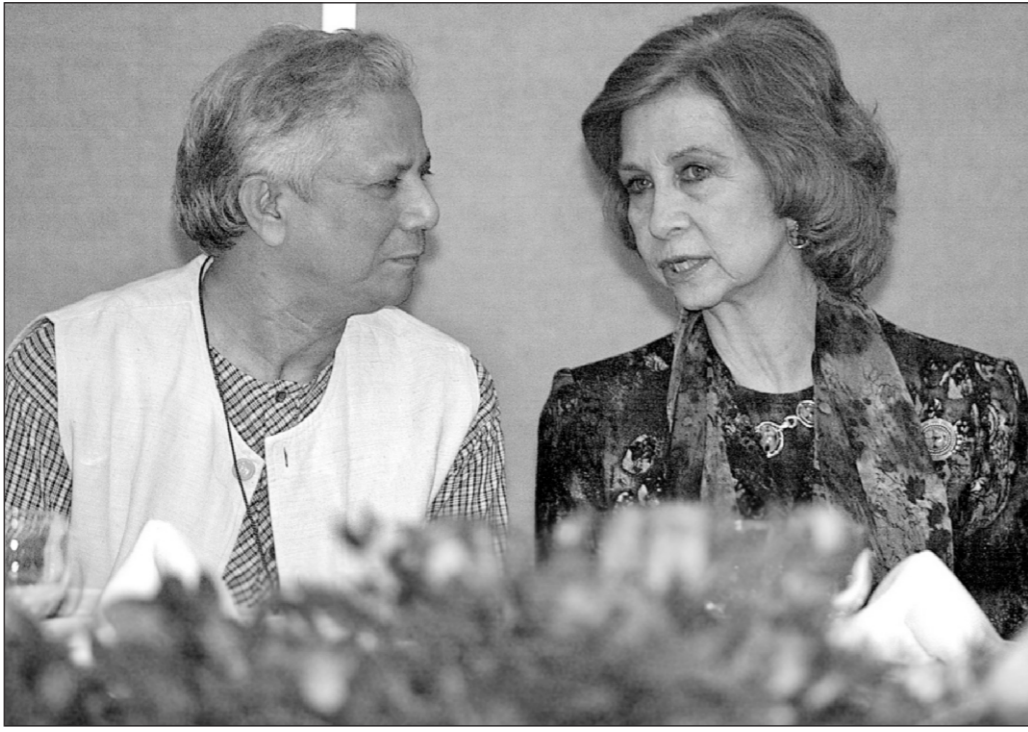
Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

# A global ambassador

It is a matter of happiness to see Dr. Mohammed Yunus sitting beside the queen of Spain. He is such a great inspiration for the youngsters of this country. He is an icon to us. He has been attending international conferences on poverty reduction and delivering his valuable speeches.

He is a global ambassador of our country. Dr Yunus has taken the challenge to alleviate poverty not only in this country but also in the world at large. He is doing a great job on poverty alleviation. We all should cooperate with him to achieve this goal.

G.M. Rezwana Rasul  
City College, Dhaka



## Electronic traffic light

Its good to read that electronic traffic signal lights are being installed at different points in Dhaka city under the WB project. No doubt it's one step advancement in the long desired development plan of Dhaka city. But let me mention here that without strictly controlling illegal parking on the roadside this modernisation of signals would not bring any benefits to city dwellers. All illegal roadside parking vehicles must get tickets for the offence and their subsequent vehicle insurance must increase proportionately, as only then people would work sensibly.

Believe it or not, if you are in Canada and driving at 3:00 o'clock in the morning in one of the worst winter storms, even then you would

Nababarsha in a very ecstatic and colourful fashion. According to reports, 1412 Nababarsha celebrations were more overwhelming and spontaneous than recent years. Actually we have very few occasions to celebrate, but were we justified in enjoying the day when hundreds of our brothers were buried alive under the rubble of a building?

We also celebrated the New Years' Day on January 1 when the whole world was recovering from the tsunami shock.

We should try to help those victims by raising funds, organising some cultural activities and getting compensation from those who are responsible for this tragic incident.

M. Jashim Uddin

It was done intentionally. I believe the opposition should wait for the tenure of the present government to be over and use their failures to their advantage during the next election, instead of calling hartals and disrupting innocent people's lives.

Arife Chowdhury  
Lalmata, Dhaka

## BDR-BSF encounters

We intently hoped that the director general-level border talks between BDR and BSF would be able to defuse the tension prevailing along the frontier. But newspaper reports indicated that the meeting ended inconclusively with the Indian side dismissing most of the major border concerns of Bangladesh including

common incident for years. Another alarming news was that a French freelance TV journalist and his Indian guide were held by BDR while entering Bangladesh without a passport recently across Bhomra border. Similar incidents occurred in the past also. Such kind of prohibited infiltration will occur again and again if BSF does not cooperate with BDR, shunning their big-brother like stance. We hope that to prevent cross border terrorism and ensure peaceful atmosphere along the frontiers, the Indian authorities will be more considerate and cooperative.

ABC  
One-mail

## BTV cooking course

I wonder if anyone, as fortunate as

women teachers in non-government rural secondary schools, a project, PROMOTE, is working for more than six years all over Bangladesh. There are a good number of fellows trying to get teaching positions in these schools.

Non-government secondary schools have to fill-up the 30% women teachers' quota. But still now, schools are not recruiting women teachers, and some of them do not have a single woman employed as teacher.

Recently, Puthimari high school, Sherkole, Singra, Natore has recruited male teachers in violation of the 30% women teachers' quota, though some women had applied for the jobs.

How long should we (women) wait to have our rights established? I would like to draw the attention of our Honourable Education Minister to this problem.

M Hasnin  
One-mail

## Address in mosque

We observed Pahela Baishakh with joy and gaiety. But my feeling got a big jolt when I heard the pre-khutba address of Imam Shaheb in a mosque, located in an area inhabited by the most enlightened people of our society. He criticised the way Pahela Baishakh was observed by millions of Bangladeshis.

As a Muslim I would request the Imams to speak about how the Muslims can enhance their education, scientific and financial advancement and stick to Islam's teaching to be honest, hard working, trustworthy, accountable and patriotic. That only can bring back the glory and honour of Muslims in the world and make others believe that Islam is the religion of peace.

Zabedin  
One-mail

## What about the owner?

Thanks to the online version of The Daily Star, people abroad can read about the developments in our beloved country. I have been closely following the news about the collapsed building in Savar since the very first day.

I realise your newspaper has been putting in a lot of effort into keeping the people informed with all the updates, but I was wondering when are you going to write a piece that has something to do with the owner of that garments factory. Media has the power to bring somebody so cruel and selfish out in the open and I don't think you've been doing a good job at it.

It is safe to assume that he's going to get away unhurt. Don't you think you have a responsibility towards the families of the dead and the wounded to bring this man out in the open? All you ever did was mention his name once or twice at the beginning. Now his name's completely disappeared!

I thank you for your role. I realise I have written some harsh things and I apologise. But people like him make my blood boil.

Sabik C.M Enayet, Ithaca, NY

## Our embassies

As a Bangladeshi expatriate in Paris I read with great amusement the news item on the Internet version of The Daily Star, titled "Uphold culture, Heritage in foreign lands, PM urges expatriates". Nothing wrong with the general thrust of the Prime Minister's statement. But it is an irony that those directly under her fail to carry out their duties while being officially posted in foreign lands to do so. I refer to the Bangladeshi ambassadors and other diplomats who should promote the interests of the country and serve their countrymen abroad. While living overseas for several decades, I have often felt embarrassed and sometimes even ashamed at the behaviour of our official representatives.

I have often wondered if they serve any purpose at all other than their personal aggrandisement. The Bangladeshi community that I am acquainted with in Paris has almost no connection with the embassy. There are several Bangladeshi nationals who are of certain eminence in the professional and cultural fields. Their eminence has often been better recognised by the Indian diplomats than by the Bangladeshis. A noted documentary film director, Amirul Arham, who strives to bring Bangladeshi issues into limelight in Europe, continues to be ignored by his own countrymen. It is the Indians and of course the French who have given him his due.

Similarly, none of the festive occasions (Eid, National Day, etc.) are celebrated by the embassy where the local Bangladeshis could be invited. What I saw on my one and only visit to the embassy in Paris was a tasteless, dilapidated place that could have easily passed for an upazila office in Satkhira, a world away from the City of Lights.

How could we have slipped so low in just 30 years? Despite all the nepotism and corruption, have we no national pride? In this day of instant communication I wonder if it might even do us good to delegate our visa services to reliable travel agents (as many smaller countries do) and close down the bulk of the embassies. Save money and embarrassment. Of course, no self-serving bureaucrat could ever axe such a golden goose and would

instantly produce a million reasons (all bogus) to justify their existence.

The other option would be to start pulling them up by their bootstraps and making the embassies work, for a change.

Riaz Quadir, Paris, France

## "69"-- too ordinary

As it takes all kinds of people to make the world, it certainly takes all kinds of serials to provide complete entertainment. But no one wants to rear up murderers in the society. Similarly, serials that promote cheating and falsehood should not be broadcast. I watched a few episodes of "69". It definitely promotes unappreciated human behaviour. The female characters featured on the serial are cranky and lack motherly characteristics. The male characters are depicted to be worthless and under the will of the women. It is a known fact that people try to imitate behaviour shown on television. Any viewer watching the serial will subconsciously copy these actions. Children and adolescents will think these are normal behavioural patterns. As a result, our society will become more restless. I am not saying serials should be allegories, but they should not encourage eccentric behaviour. The makers of the serial might argue that the incidents and actions shown on the serial are day-to-day affairs, but the lack of a positive character or solution makes the serial too ordinary and close to vulgar.

I hope the respectable makers of the serial will consider the above points and use their original ideas in a more beautiful way.

Nur Taz Rahman  
Dhanmondi Tutorial School, Dhaka

## Higher education not for all

"Shobar jonno shikkha" (education for all) but "uccho shikkha" (higher education) is not for every one! Education may be a basic right, but higher education is not a must. It is only for those who have either merit or money to continue study. Yes, general people have the right of having education, but that has a level. Such as secondary or intermediate- but after that, the students should have the liberty of choosing different paths. It's not necessary that if I do not have merit, still I have to continue my higher studies. If we look at the western world we will see that they do not die for being highly educated. Only the students with merit go for higher education. They know that they can handle the hardship. When a student finds it difficult to study, he just gives up and join the job sector with his limited educational background. And people get jobs according to their merit and



# Comments on F-16

I find O. H. Kabir's comments regarding the procurement of F-16 to upgrade Bangladesh's Air Force quite pointless. The sale of F-16s to both India and Pakistan is nothing more than an income generation exercise to benefit the world's largest arms dealer, Lockheed Martin. Even if Bangladesh were to procure a squadron of the latest, most advanced fighters in the world, it would be of little use since if India were to have ambitions against Bangladesh, its overwhelming military might would be hard to defend against. The most appropriate form of defence for a county like Bangladesh would be to invest in missile technology such as Surface-to-Air (SAM) and Surface-to-Ground batteries in order to inflict as much damage as possible to any invading force. This in itself would be a deterrent against any aggression. Even if one were to invest in aircraft, the most appropriate choice would be the Sukhoi Su-27 multi-role fighter bombers which have more hard points, hence affording an opportunity to carry more offensive weapons, and has high fuel storage capability allowing longer flight duration, than the Mig-29, F-15 Eagles, F-16 Fighting Falcons or F18 Hornets.

Since Bangladesh' military has proved itself fully capable in serving international needs via UN peacekeeping duties, it's my belief that the defence of the nation should focus on missile technology and that any future procurement of combat aircraft should be tailored towards ship-borne take-off and landing which would provide our peacekeepers air support at a moment's notice. The only such aircraft that exists is the FA2 Sea Harrier although the F35 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) is planned to supersede the Sea Harrier from the majority of sea-borne forces.

Abdul M. Ismail  
Liverpool, England

educational qualification. In our country those students who know that they do not have the ability or qualification to continue higher studies should not hesitate to join technical courses or self employment facilities. Self-employed people are doing better than meritorious unemployed graduates. And we should keep in mind that our greed for higher studies is giving some people chance to earn

money by setting up private universities. And you will see whoever does graduation will not get a good job and handsome salary. Only the fittest will survive!

Cantara Wali Ruhi, BBA, DU

# Cricket and Kashmir



Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf travelled to New Delhi to watch an ODI match. He left no stone unturned to raise and discuss the Kashmir dispute with Indian leaders.

India and Pakistan, the two nuclear-armed rivals, played cricket well and discussed

Kashmir as well.

Pakistani President Musharraf and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh maintained that the Kashmir problem could not be solved militarily. Is it a signal of good sportsmanship?

So India and Pakistan may

play more ODI matches even in Sreenagar, Muzaffarabad and Siachen height with bat and ball only, and not fight with missiles and tanks against each other.

The Pakistani President has however said 'Unless we resolve the Kashmir dispute,

it can erupt again under a future frame'. But he was confident that the two sides were poised to take the peace process forward.

Let us hope for the best.

O H Kabir  
Dhaka-1203

be amazed to see how civilised motorists are stopping at red signals and maintaining their speed. People here in Canada would not dare to break laws simply because of higher insurance premium and suspension of license, if there is repetitive violation of law.

People of Bangladesh must respect the law. Mohammad S Jamal  
Scarborough  
Toronto, Canada

## Nababarsha celebrations

This year we celebrated our Bangla

Chakta, Chittagong

## Hartal

Recently, Tareq Rahman, the joint secretary general of the BNP, had survived an accident where the wire of a lift in a hotel in Khulna snapped and fell about 11 feet.

I am surprised that no hartal has been called on this issue. I am glad and so is the rest of the country. We cannot afford hartals.

If it were to happen to any opposition leaders, there would have been at least a couple of hartals by now. Opposition leaders would have by now asked for FBI investigation and also would have told the pressmen that

push-in, unauthorised killing of villagers and presence of anti-Bangladesh terrorists and their camps in Indian territory. However, it also expressed its determination to continue with barbed-wire border fencing unilaterally. We are shocked to see the failure of such a high profile meeting. The natural consequence of such stubborn, unfriendly attitude was that no sooner had the meeting been finished, then a fierce encounter took place between BDR and BSF on Akhaura border killing at least five villagers inside Bangladesh. Thousands of locals had to flee their homes. Some of them are still missing. This has become almost a

me, had seen the cooking course aired on BTV World on Friday, 15 April 2005. The step by step procedure of cooking four favourite recipes was shown live. They were: fried rice, sichuan chicken, mixed vegetable fry, and chicken bharta. The most disgusting part of the whole scenario was the state of the kitchen, the utensils, storing of the ingredients and the spices. There was an aluminum saucepan filled with water that looked as if it had not been washed for years. Nothing in the kitchen looked hygienic. On the other hand, the amount of tasting salt (monosodium glutamate) that was being put into the dishes was appalling. Tasting salt is an item which should be used in careful amounts. For instance, a pinch for a kilo of meat, fish or vegetable. Whereas the chef was virtually seen putting at least a tablespoon of it into each item. Do they know that 'tasting salt' can cause high blood pressure? In fact there was no professionalism in the way the entire programme was screened.

Finally, the programme ended with footage of the food being served in a well-decorated and cosy environment of an elegant Chinese restaurant.

I wonder what was the reaction of those who saw this particular programme. I suggest the BTV World pull up their socks.

Michael, One-mail

## Women teachers

There are a few (negligible number) women teachers working in Non-Government rural secondary schools. To have better prepared

## Welcome, donkey!



According to a recent press report an organisation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) area is going to import 20 donkeys to Bangladesh from a neighbouring country. Imported five female and fifteen male donkeys will be used to transport essential commodities to the remotest parts of Bandarban hill district and also to raise donkey population in Bangladesh.

Although frequently we call an obstinate or stupid person a 'Gadha' (donkey), still donkey is one of the most important species of the ass family specially reputed for their physical capability to carry huge loads gently and calmly. Meanwhile, donkey is seldom seen in Bangladesh. Hence we welcome the initiative to rear and raise donkeys in our country.

Prof. M. Zahidul Haque  
Chairman  
Department of Language  
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Dhaka

# Local rock musicians

Mr. Mahfuzul Haque attacked the new generation of Bangladeshi rock musicians for possessing the same qualities that he praises when it comes to the older generation. Whereas innovative music and lyrics are believed to be the cause (which I do not dispute) of the popularity of Azam Khan, Feedback, LRB, Souls, Renaissance, etc are forging ahead with "ekta notun kichu koro". To paraphrase the old song is said to be "cacophonous". Those who are calcified in their ways will always find the new challenging, even intimidating. Maybe the day will come, although I hope it never does, when I will be so comfortable with my own limitations that I will be hostile towards whatever new aesthetic values future generations bring to us.

But, ultimately, aesthetic values are just that and nothing more. The guitar melody that you find harsh, someone else finds musical. This has been true of every musical or literary movement throughout history. We find Horace complaining about the lack of sincerity in modern (for him) poetry, we find the baroque musicians criticised for not being as smoothly flowing as their predecessors; we even find Byron's open-necked collars and Italian rhyme schemes coming into scrutiny in much the same way that Mr. Haque criticises the so-called underground

rest—they are our heroes, the ideals we strive to live up to. You can compare the "underground" (a term I greatly dislike) lyric material to any of the older bands' songs favourably. To be sure, we do not have the same great social causes to uphold like, say, Azam Khan—he was a freedom fighter and a hero; we were all born after the war. But LRB's greatest hit is a love song; Black's greatest hit is a song about a rape victim. Feedback's most-remembered song is "Melaye Jaire"; everybody knows Cryptic Fate by "Sreshto", a song about our war of liberation. For every "Mon Shudhu Mon Chhuwecche" we have a "Guti" trilogy and five "Odeka Swargo"s. Where then do we fall short? I will admit that some of the new bands do pronounce Bangla in a most irritating and unmusical manner. This is the exception, however, and not the rule. I can think of two bands that do so, one of them being the biggest and the best of our kind. In their case, the singer has a speech impediment and talks like that off-stage as well; it is not an affectation. He is conscious of his problem and does his best to work on it, but when you are naturally shy and must face tens of thousands of people in a concert, that isn't the best way to confront your shortcomings. Both the bands I am thinking of, by the way, are not "buddies" from any "aris-



bands.

As a member of one of the first bands in the underground scene, back when it was truly underground, I find such accusations unjust and ultimately, I can't defend our musical values beyond saying that we too have grown up listening to The Beatles on one hand and Azam Khan on the other, and since music is so important to us we listen to as much of it as we can.

Feedback, LRB, Renaissance, and all the

tocratic society". I, and most of my bandmates, were educated in English medium schools (not that we actually care who went to which type of school), but we speak Bangla perfectly well. So before you criticise someone for creating art that is not to your liking, Mr. Haque, try contributing something to our society yourself.

Arafat Kazi  
One-mail