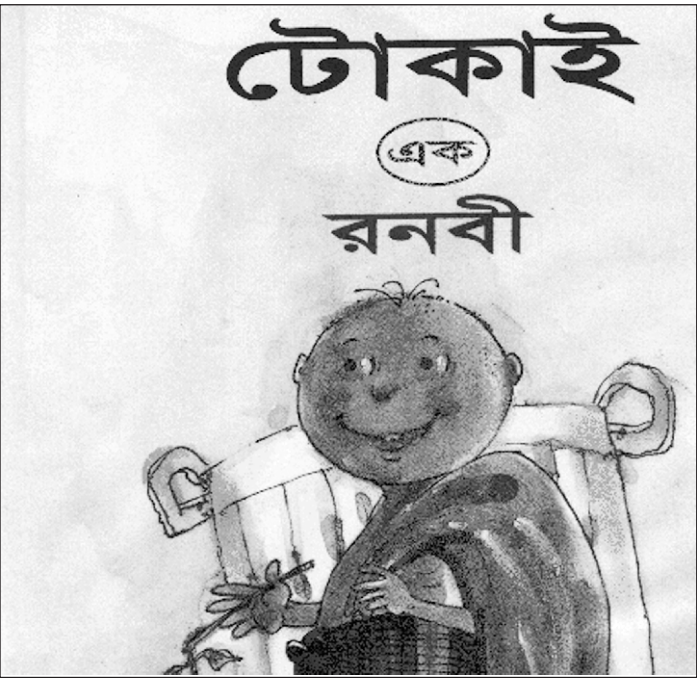


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

Impact of cartoons



SOURCE: CS.TORONTO.EDU

The impact of cartoon, be it a cartoon movie, cartoon on social aspects or politics, is obvious. Kids do derive immense pleasure watching cartoon movies --- some adults do the same as well. Political or social cartoons in the newspapers and magazines provide a different touch to the readers along with the obvious flavour to the illustrations. What the writers fail to depict through words; a good cartoonist does it very comfortably through some sketches --- plain pencil sketches or the colourful ones. A single cartoon of some mere dots or dashes (portrait) awfully reveals something very deep and drastic and it catches the readers' eyes! Think of once famous cartoon "Tokai" by eminent cartoonist Ronobi how brilliant it had been! "Tokai" used to be published in the then weekly magazine "Bichitra"; Ronobi, in his unique creation, used to depict different social anomalies that were so eye catching ---so diverse, eloquent, vibrant.

As I recall today some of his famous words: a group of researchers with cameras were wandering around for birds; seeing them the Tokai suggested that they be just beside the dustbin to locate a flock of crows! Tokai, with his few wry and straight words, used to direct others' attention to the bare facts that usually remain obscure in their eyes. I started reading Bichitra in my school life and thus did I enjoy the famous cartoon TOKAI --- it became, to an extent, the national spokesman-an icon of a kind! There are newspapers and magazines that proudly place cartoons on them; and the readers find a great source of enjoyment, while the architects of the cartoons get their good jobs done. Congratulations, Ronobi! **Rafiqul Islam Rime** Lecturer, Department of English Language & Literature Premier University, Chittagong

Inflation

I would like to thank Mr. Syed A Basher and Mr.Sharif Faisal Khan for their clear and precise article on inflation titled "The Inflation Debate"(July 30 DS).In this article they clearly mentioned the causes behind Bangladesh's inflationary pressure using the AD-AS model. The gist of their article was that the price level increase in our country is due to both supply shocks as well as demand side shocks and they had statistics to back up their judgment i.e. although the CPI inflation increased, at the same time real GDP also went upward indicating the fact that there has been strong export demand, greater inflow of remittances etc besides the increase in the prices of oil. Therefore this article also highlighted that CDP economist Debapriya Bhattacharya's analysis was wrong, since he had claimed that inflation is occurring due to supply-side shocks only. For a layman like me, this article was certainly an eye-opener as I came to know about the real factors contributing to the increased price level. **Wasif Wahed** Old DOHS, Dhaka

PSTN operators

The recent decision to give operating licence to private PSTN operators in Dhaka is certainly a welcome one. However, we want that the BTRC will ensure complete PSTN service by the private service providers. We obviously don't want some more restricted-mobility mobile service providers. In other parts of the country, where the private operators got licence earlier, it hardly seems they are providing PSTN services. Most of them are selling RIM card like cell operators to be used in mobile hand-sets. In simpler terms, we want to use a PSTN phone connection to fax, operate Internet and other data services besides voice calls. **Sabbir Ahmed** University of Dhaka

Bank statements

I am an 18-year old Bangladeshi living abroad and well-acquainted with the basic guiding principles of

democratic nations by now. The news of Bangladesh Bank's refusal to release the two former prime ministers' bank statements has disgusted me. Bank statements are the matter of the respective individuals not the central bank. Of course, Bangladesh Bank has its autonomy but why is it being extended in matters where autonomy does not apply? To withhold them under any pretext, be it autonomy or anything else, is wrong. These women are our former heads of government and if they are treated with such disregard, can we expect better treatment? And can we be expected to have respect for such institutions? Small wonder, Bangladesh is what it is today a land rife with fraud and disregard for order in general. There is a cycle of disrespect in Bangladesh in which government officials have no respect for each other as well as the public institutions which they represent, which is then reciprocated by the wary public. Where is the chance for a future when such an abysmal culture exists in our country? Individuals in a democracy can expect as much protection as society as a whole. Our institutions are notorious for mismanagement and corruption. What can we expect? **Eva Rahman** One-mail

Increasing house rents

One can easily recall that even 10 years back the people who lived on their limited but handy income could manage to rent a good house or apartment in the city. But now the prices of all the necessities, daily household essentials including foodstuff, educational and transportation costs have gone so sky high that families like us are no longer able to maintain a smooth middle class life while paying the ever increasing house rent. Usually, most of the landlords don't bother about the problems of tenants and they like to raise the rents of their houses each year, sometimes two or three times in a year without taking care of tenant's capacity or the present average income of general people. I doubt how sensible it is to impose an increment of Tk 1,000 over the monthly rent at the end of each

year while the house is not even in a posh zone or it is not growing in size! Landlords hardly consider the poor economic condition of our country. I wonder if there is any law which restricts those greedy landlords who are fond of increasing the house rent to satisfy their insatiable appetite for money. If there exists any law of such a kind, measures should be taken to make both the parties aware of it and the law should be enforced where it is necessary. Moreover, as it is a kind of business, landlords should pay taxes to the state for the rent they are collecting and increasing at their sweet will! **Md.Ali Haider** MS student South Dakota State University USA

Arrests of top leaders

The arrest of the top leader of Bangladesh Awami League, Sheikh Hasina has evoked mixed reactions. The reactions have been in line with the orientations of the individualsAwami League-aligned or those who are predisposed to the party are decrying the arrest, while those who are anti-AL are sort of welcoming it. But neither group of people is being objective. They have their own partisan agendas and their thinking is subjective, unfortunately. There is another group, a big one, which is trying to unemotionally and objectively look at the situation and come to a conclusion. I, for one, consider myself to be belonging to the last group of individuals. What I as a Bangladeshi would like to see is an evenhanded, fair and transparent treatment of the detainees. There should be no difference between a former prime minister, a minister, a businessman, a bureaucrat or any ordinary person other than giving 'division' if that person is entitled to it. Just because one was a PM does not make one immune to arrest. They must be brought before a court of law as long as it's done properly and with justification. Why should anyone, be they learned people like professors of a university, various professionals like doctors, engineers and lawyers, or professional politicians and leaders, think that so and so is above the law and should remain

so? Being the daughter or wife of a big personality is irrelevant. Why should there be a sub-jail where one can live in relative comfort with a daily supply of four newspapers? What if another supreme leader of a party is arrested also and there be a need of another comfortable sub-jail with similar amenities? I realize that they are not ordinary persons like me or most of us, so they have to be given special treatment. But they were at one time the supreme authority of the land and shouldered the maximum responsibility of anything that happened during their time in power. So, I believe if they are found guilty after a fair trial they must be given the maximum penalty under the law. Since they are leaders they must be held to a higher standard. They must be held fully accountable. For their sake and ours, I

trust the present government will ensure fair and transparent trial proceedings. Bangladeshis will be keeping an eye on the proceedings. If foreign lawyers or relatives want to come and defend the detainees, let them do that. **Sayed A. Chaudhury** Gulshan, Dhaka

Hasina's arrest

It does not take a rocket scientist to figure this one out. The arrest of Sheikh Hasina, under emergency rules, without representation being allowed, suspending her basic human rights in the way it was done was an arbitrary use of the law. Whether the act constitutes an attempt to stifle a political leader is for you, the readers, to decide. Ask yourself: is Sheikh Hasina's arrest a regular

part of the government's drive to clean up corruption, or is it an attempt to consolidate power? A prima facie fight for reform to hold a free and fair election in Bangladesh to protect democracy has now become a crusade to ensure that no opinion opposing the new order exists. Yes, in the end a certain type of 'controlled and balanced' democracy shall prevail in Bangladesh, I suppose. But is really choosing your elected representative from a list of pre-selected politicians a truly functioning democracy? Hasina's arrest will therefore harm democracy, in that perception of the people is that the arrest was based on shoddy evidence. **Matthew Islam** (Bar Student) London, UK

Iraqis celebrate

I thank the Iraqi players not only for their victory in the field but also for their commitment. They knew how important it was for them. It was not merely a game in the field but it was an opportunity to unite the whole

nation. How a game can bring unity to the most fragile society in the world, Iraq has proved it again. I was overwhelmed to see a father coming down the street with his little child in Baghdad to celebrate the victory.

Their ancestors made civilization. I hope this win will stop the sectarian war in Iraq. **Mohammad Anisur Rahman** Abdul Gani Road, Pahartali Chittagong

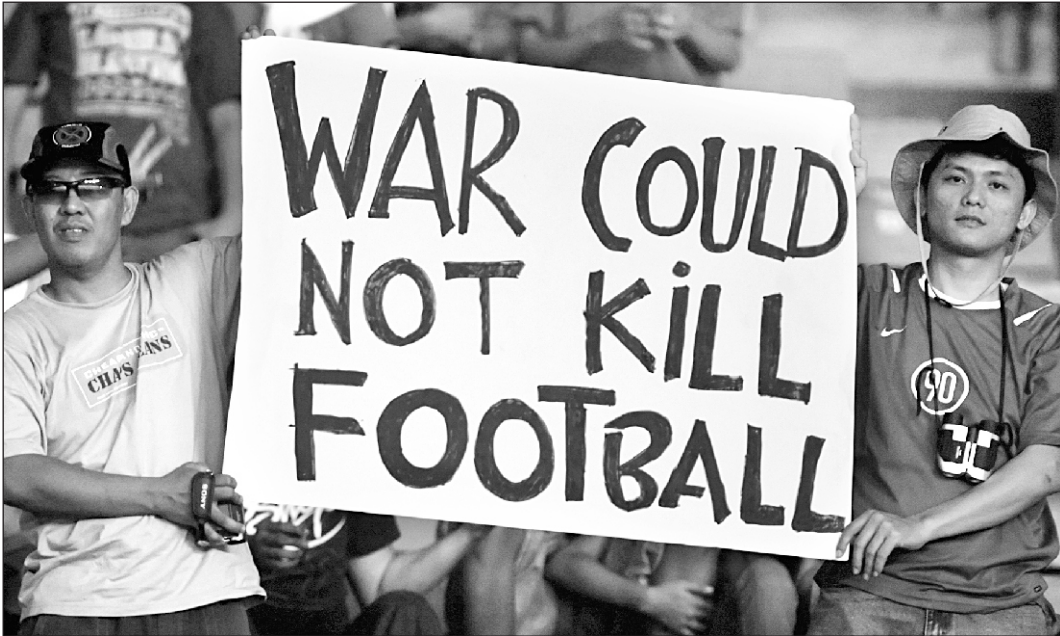


PHOTO: AFP