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.

dispense justice unless inves-

tigating institutions are not

strong and skilful. In terms of

mon corruption.

the truth.

Greenspan's 20-year mone-

savings or earnings to pay for

it. The loose money gave the

stock market players a

bonanza but ultimately the

economists had indicated

why socialism is impossible to

work and how it would destroy

freedom and civilisation if it

must work. Yet again they have

said it clearly, why a govern-

ment monopoly on the issu-

ance of money would bring

total economic collapse by

their excessive paper printing.

IMF/Fed principles, if

Bangladesh can adhere to the

Austrian understanding of

money, market prices would

remain stable and predict-

able. The people would then

enjoy and benefit from a

'multi currency competitive'

regime allowing importers,

exporters, consumers, savers,

and investors to choose their

currency. This is market free-

dom where competition

checks the excessive printing

and supply of any taka in the

market. When money supply

is tight, prices stay stable as

taka retains its value. It only

loses value when there is

excess supply. Abnormal high

prices of stocks or rice are a

reflection of that money

Only less government and

more freedom, but firm Rule

of Law, can unleash ideas and

enterprise to overcome our

woes. Let us hope Hasina wins

the test, and with it another

term to fulfil her father's

dream for a country that could

Recently, I was reading an

article on agriculture written

by eminent media personality

Mr. Shaikh Siraj in a national

daily while my four and a half

years old toddler was playing

beside me. A photograph of

Mr Siraj was attached in the

inset of the article. When I

asked my son to name the

man, he instantly recognized

him. Mr. Siraj has emerged as

an icon of Agricultural

Information after decades of

persistent service for creating

awareness in the agriculture

arena. This story asserts that if

some one dedicatedly and

devotedly serves the nation

for a good cause he can reach

so deep in people's minds,

salute this man's unrelenting

effort to create a difference

and lead a silent revolution in

the neglected agricultural

While giving the inaugural

speech in an international

seminar on jute, the jute

minister aptly remarked that

the collaborators of the soil

along with World Bank and

IMF policy caused the golden

sector's demise. World Bank

and IMF's dubious policy has

greatly undermined our jute

flourishing due to the right

policy adopted by the Indian

But the Indian jute sector is

sector.

Dhaka

sector.

government.

Md Zonaed Emran

University of Dhaka

Dept. of Political Science

Md. Abdus Salam

ONE Bank Ltd

Motijheel Branch

**Jute sector** 

Relationship Manager

I take this opportunity to

even in the minds of kids.

Director, Liberal Bangla

The government's chal-

syndrome.

be rich as gold.

Nizam Ahmad

A sincere

campaigner

Instead of following

Decades back, the Austrian

economic balloon has burst.

# Killing of animals

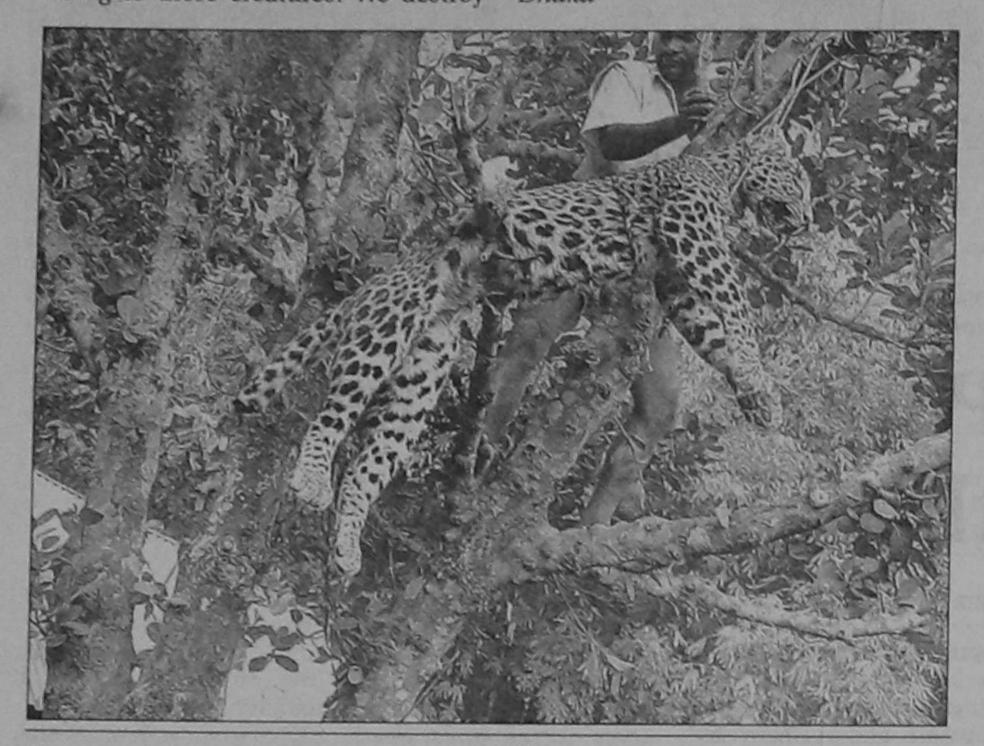
The killing of big cats and other wild creatures is horribly increasing in the rural areas. It's clear that lack of awareness among the rural people is causing this casualty. Also, there are no proper measures to save these animals or their habitats. Firstly, due to rapid clearing of forests, these animals are losing their homes. On top of that, they are dying at the hands of people when hunger forces them to go beyond their locality.

Now, what kind of justice are we doing to these creatures? We destroy

their homes and then we kill them too! The media and other concerned agencies should play an active role here by popularising techniques that would help villagers save themselves as well as the wild animals.

The forest department should seriously look into the matter, and not just wave their hands dismissively. Md. Sadique Uddin

West Dhanmondi Rayer Bazar Dhaka



### Relocate the control room

Occupying a big chunk of land of immense value, the police control room at Shahbagh, Dhaka serves no purpose. There is no reason to have a separate police control room in the heart of the city and depriving the city dwellers of a breathing space. Moreover, the police control room is not situated centrally either. The city has expanded far and wide. With modernization and expansion and increase in the number of the police stations in the city, each of these police stations should be developed separately to serve as control room. In case, the police authorities feel the necessity of having a central control room, it should be located elsewhere. Possible sites could be Sher-e-Bangla Nagar or Nilkhet. The entire area presently occupied by the police control room should be vacated and the area developed and beautified under the overall development of Suhrawardy Uddyan. Outside the police control room premises are few shops and billboards. These should be removed immediately to give the landscape a cleaner and greener look. As of now, the entire area looks chaotic and clumsy and needs refur-

bishing. The police department would have to be magnanimous in vacating the area, keeping in mind public inter-

Shamim Ahmed Gulshan, Dhaka

### Ombudsman

As we see for transparency of government actions in various disciplines, an instrument or institution for check and balance is necessary as a watchdog. I offer my humble opinion here as follows:

We have by now, as far as I

find, one such watchdog, called Ombudsman, to watch and report on Income Tax only under NBR, in place already. In respect of other disciplines, however, I do not know whether there are many or anymore. If so, it is okay then, if not, the necessity of creating or manning the posts of Ombudsman in every field by passing a bill, is felt. Whereas these are already in existence, their presence need to be brought to prominence by making them fully opera-

Introduction of the office of the Ombudsman in fact was included in the 2001-2006 general election manifestoes by the political parties. In the last election manifestoes of the major political parties, the inclusion of the same however was not there per-

Therefore it is our expectation that the present government will look into this matter seriously, so that the functions of offices of the Ombudsmen in all possible areas of the ministries and/or divisions are fully made operational without any loss of time. We have seen the transparent ballot boxes in the last election conducted by the EC under the CTG.

Now, we want to see our government functioning with the accountability having its reflection clearly visible on the face of Ombudsman.

Engr. Shaheedul Islam Gulshan-1 Dhaka

### Bishwa Ijtema

Thank you for publishing pictures taken from the recently concluded Bishwa Ijtema in your daily (February 3, 2009). It really helps readers to understand the magnitude of participation of Muslims in this congregation. However, I differ (though I am not a

scholar in the field of Islam) from the way you described the Ijtema in the page. The Bishwa Ijtema has been referred to as 'the second largest Islamic congregation in the world'. Obviously, the reference was made in comparison with the Hajj, a compulsory congregation of 'financially and physically capable' Muslims. My view is that Hajj is a congregation where it is compulsory to participate only for a 'capable' Muslim, whereas necessity to participate in Bishwa Ijtema is voluntary ('nafal'). I think it is not proper to compare a voluntary Islamic event ('nafal') with a compulsory Islamic event like Hajj ('farz'). I would appreciate if you verify this view of mine with qualified Islamic scholars. If my view is valid, then I would recommend everyone to refer 'Bishwa Ijtema' using the phrase 'the largest voluntary Islamic congregation' Chowdhury Golam Kibria

### Open pit mining

On e-mail

Since this new government took office, this is the best news for the power starved and fuel import dependent country as reported in most dailies on February 3. Congratulations to the government for a pragmatic policy decision, taken in the overall interest of the country.

The government should and must go ahead about this important programme with all seriousness and mobilise its large political capital to create the necessary public opinion; convincing the people of its importance and the need for Bangladesh to explore this available coal; a vital energy resource lying below.

The initial steps needed for rehabilitation of the displaced people is appreciated; and I wish the authorities to take it

up at the earliest, with all sincerity and due seriousness. The effected people should realise that many lives were sacrificed in 1971, many families lost their homes and properties for Bangladesh. Compared to this, the losses of the displaced people who will be resettled is very small! They must realise that it is for the overall need of the country for the badly needed fuel for power generation. For this critical national issue, it will be worth even sacrificing some popularity if needed to meet the demand of millions of power starved Bangladeshis; more so in the rural areas.

Frankly, I feel the hue and cry about it which has so long been nurtured, while the past government was busy in lining their personal pockets, is in the overall context; "much ado about nothing' realistically. After all is said and done, like jute which is called "the golden fibre", coal is "Black Gold" for Bangladesh!

The government should move positively for exploiting this valuable resource; decisively and with full determination to make this endeavour a reality. It will be their single and unique achievement which will last for a long time; while other good deeds may be forgotten. On the overall national cost benefit basis; it may be worth far more than losing a few seats in the next election. It is only mature and seasoned politicians who can rise to the occasion to take hard but needed positive decisions and transform them to reality for the nation. We hope and believe that this government will not let us down!

S.A. Mansoor

### Reforms

Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina rewarded her loyalists and handed favours to certain members of her party.

Downgraded, not purged, were party men who had advocated party reforms and attempted to execute the wellliked minus-two formula of the caretaker administration.

However, the caretaker government suddenly retreated from its grand reform mode. Up came the AL with a landslide victory. The BNP lost badly believing, until the last day, that there would be no elections.

In victory, the AL should lenge is reform in all spheres. have declared itself a government of reforms, but far from it. To cut unbridled powers of the prime minister and the concentration of power in Dhaka should be a priority. Reforms within political organisations are critical for the country. Should Hasina be the prime minister, the leader of the House, and the party chief all at the same time? Should the party secretary general be a cabinet member too? Can the party members use the ballot box to choose committees, or must they become loyalists to survive in

politics? For general peace and stability, the police must have its operational independence to crack down on violence as it sees fitting. Constitutionally, the police, not the government, must guarantee our security no matter which party wins the national polls.

There is also the trial of war crimes that would be a failure as the mass trial of the corrupt recently was. Courts fail to

### Parliamentary issues

resources and policies, the AL After nearly two years the should spell out how to caretaker government on 6 improve these, and how they January 2009 handed over would liberalise the economy, power to the grand alliance. which alone can slash com-From the beginning it was apparent that the government Hasina's administration & the opposition were at has failed to see the cause of loggerheads over several issues like election of the price hikes and market unpredictability both within and deputy speaker from the outside the country. opposition, seat arrangements in the House, slide in Mainstream economists blame free market and the law & order & lately the withextravaganza of US derivadrawal of the Special Security tives, sub prime mortgaging, Forces (SSF) escort for the speculations, or excessive Leader of the Opposition. global demand but these are

The Speaker is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the not correct explanations or Secretary is the Chief The recent abnormal price Operating Officer (COO) & the rise in our consumer markets Sergeant-at-Arms is the Chief or of oil is a reflection of too Security Officer (CSO) in the much money in circulation precincts of the Jatiya nationally and globally. The Sangsad. Each aforesaid prime cause is Alan public & government official of the Republic has specific tary policies that gave US jobs in parliament. The seat citizens a false prosperity. arrangements must be under-Their cars, fridges, holidays, taken by the Secretary of the and homes were all on cheap Parliament Secretariat on the bank credits, and they had no basis of the universal seat arrangements for the Treasury & the Opposition bench members including the alliances.

The parliamentary democracy remains functional when the Leader of the House & the Leader of the Opposition are being treated fairly and at par. Out of parliamentary sessions & committee meetings the Leader of the Opposition attends the state functions and also joins in the policy making process of the government with the rank & status as set in the Order of Precedence by the Cabinet Division of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Golam Ashraf Gulshan, Dhaka

programme includes, publion English language, social and health issues, distribution of complementary copies of DS to selected schools, etcetera.

Appreciating the initiative

Professor M Zahidul Haque Chairman Department of Agricultural

System, SAU, Dhaka

Our finance minister has backed away from his contemplation to devalue taka against the dollar because of a very reasonable argument by Bangladesh Bank that it would be punishing for fifteen crore people to pay higher prices for essentials. We have to import the major part of such essentials from abroad and people are already groaning under pressure of high prices of basic necessities!

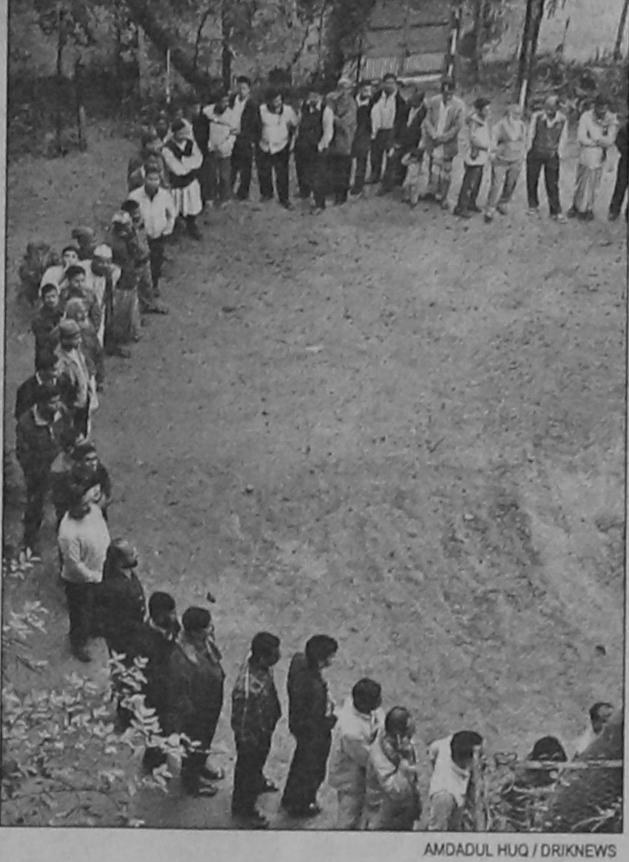
Meanwhile, a news item published in a daily on February 2009 said that our remitters from New York were sending money through Hundi via India to get nearly Tk 10 more than the government exchange rate.

Many years back, at a certain time, when the exchange rate of the government was Tk 20, the remitters were paid Tk 30 by the then government which totally stopped the Hundi remittances! Rumi Ahmed

Bashundhara, Dhaka

I read with interest the letter under the above heading published in your issue of 4th February written by Prof. Zahedul Haq.

Rickshaw is the shorter version of the Japanese word Jin rick sha meaning man powered vehicle. Rickshaw in its original form was pulled by human beings, now the form that we see is cycle rickshaw.



## True democracy

Albeit having some flaws, "democracy" is the best among the different doctrines in politics. So, a democratically elected government will run the country in a better way, it is hoped. But all elected governments finally do not remain good. Hitler of Germany and Marcos of the Philippines were chosen by the people but we know about them.

Our politicians talk about democracy day and night but they do not believe in it and they do not exercise it even in their own party.

True democracy has to be established at all levels, if we want to get the best results. Harun-or-Rashid

Sobhanbag, Dhaka

### English In Schools

Recently, the education minister inaugurated the 'English In Schools' (EIS), a programme jointly launched by The Daily Star and Aktel to promote English language teaching at secondary schools across the country. The cation of teaching materials

the education minister assured all-out support to EIS programme and said-"This programme will greatly help the students in learning English". Meanwhile the minister suggested involving local educated people in the project-cycle for better results.

We heartily congratulate the initiators of EIS and wish it grand success.

Extension & Information

### Good thinking

Playpen School

### Rickshaws

I am personally not in favour of having the rickshaws in its present form to crowd our already overcrowded streets. This ugly looking unstable mode of transport is a road hazard. I am however not opposed to having rickshaws in our roads after upgrading the vehicle.

The vehicle itself is crammed and the protruding ends of the rear wheels constitute risk for other vehicles on the road. Its centre of gravity is too

unstable mode of transport. With a little bit of lateral force it turns turtle. shaws on the road but those

high and that makes it an

I would like to see rickshould be improved stability and redesigned rickshaws. Recently, I read in a news-

paper report that in New Delhi they have introduced a form of rickshaw powered by solar power. What I would like to see in our roads are redesigned rickshaws with lower centre of gravity, broader and more comfortable seats with longer leg room. The battery technology has advanced tremendously in the last couple of decades and we should be able to have battery that can supply power to these rickshaws to travel at least one hundred kilometre without having to recharge. The batteries could be recharged from the electric mains during the night for operation during the day and at the same time there must also be arrangement of trickle charging the battery from the solar panel to be fitted on the roof of the rickshaw. Our BUET may be entrusted with the job of making the prototype of such a vehicle and later this can be mass-produced and put on

the roads. Rickshaw drivers could also come under the licensing arrangement and traffic could be more orderly. Salahuddin Ayubi

### Corridor, transit,

ministers can think that a

bilateral transit or a corridor is

### and connectivity We find this incredible that

One-mail

only an economic issue and is beyond any gamut of political considerations. We, as a nation, are surely headed for a disaster if this mindset persists. We urge our respected Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to intervene and to request her ministers to get up-todate on issues of political economy and regional cooperation. We are speechless to see that currently our ministers are speaking along the same line of argument that is being advocated by Honourable High Commissioner of India on bilateral corridor/transit, purely from an economic perspective without any political consideration whatsoever. While we surely need a friendly relation with India, we must not forget that on this particular issue, we are two contending parties engaged in a sharp diplomatic discourse, trying to maximize our

respective country's interests. Having said this, we must also clarify that we are not at all against a very well defined "regional connectivity" in the changing context of world

trade and politics. However, this "connectivity" must have a regional perspective, as promoted by ESCAP and should, at the minimum, be a comprehensive single package involving (a) India-Bangladesh-India corridor and (b) Bangladesh-India-Nepal and Bangladesh-India-Bhutan transits. Unless the above two come under the purview of a single regional package of connectivity, citizens of this country will oppose a stand alone "India-Bangladesh-India Corridor". Our policy makers (including the honourable parliament members) must not fail to recognize that any discussion on "connectivity" must involve India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Bhutan with a single regional framework of negotiation.

So the ministers and the party in power in Bangladesh cannot even consider discussing India-Bangladesh-India corridor without tagging this issue with Bangladesh's connectivity (transit) with Nepal and Bhutan within the same package to be drafted in one

Raj Rahman Gulshan Dhaka

### **Transitissue** The above is an economic as

well as political issue. When we want to politicise it, we turn it to our benefit. Primarily it is an economic issue .If transit is allowed it will benefit the stakeholders of the Chittagong Port and service providers. Their income will rise and scope of business will rise. Transit ICDs will mushroom with the influentials trying to get part of the cake. Some of the customs brokers will specialize on transit cargo. Transport companies will be routing containers through Bangladesh to the entry points in India. Franchise holders of the toll roads/bridges will be happy to have additional trucks on the highway meaning more income. Roadside eating houses will earn more.

We have accepted the term of transit without knowing it how it works. Once our central, commercial banks, import & export trade controllers and customs were allergic to the term transit. With the containerisation of import and export cargo the term of transit does not exist. Customs officials do not penalize importers on the grounds of shipment from other than the country of origin. Banks do not hold docs on the grounds of discrep-

But there will be people who will be opposing the transit of cargo on political grounds.

T.J. Biswas Motijheel, Dhaka

### Rafigul Islam Rime Agrabad, Chittagong

# Rafa!

Australian Open '09 man's singles was a historic event for many reasons. It was the defining time for both the players engaged in the battle on the court world's number one seed Rafael Nadal from Spain, and the number two seed Roger Federer of Switzerland. It was a test of nerves, skills for both the players on court that evening in Melbourne. Federer was ready before the game to take himself to the elite group of maximum number of grand slam winners Pit Sampras was alone before him only. On the other hand, Nadal had to make a mark there in Australia winning that trophy --- it was his maiden Australian grand slam.

Yes, the New Year ushered in a fresh beginning for the irresistible world number one Rafael Nadal who fought another historic semis against his compatriot Fernando Verdssco the longest match in the history of that event! Rafa with his indefatigable spirit and incredible resilience turned his about-to-lose match into a historic win! Then he went for the final against Roger --awesome stamina, fitness and determination! Federer set to make a record started the tournament

well, with his renewed spirit, skills and an urge to take him beyond all; before falling a sad prey to the new-king Rafa. Roger and Rafa showed all that they have in their playing armour backhand, forehand, volley, half volley, service and what not! Congrats, Rafa! Congrats, Roger!

