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.

# Role of ACC

The last caretaker govt declared a crusade against corruption. This crusade was directed by the Anti Corruption Commission (ACC). Many heavy weight ministers, MPs & other corrupt people were arrested. Even two former prime ministers were arrested. At that time the ACC was in an active mode but now it is silent.

After the election of 29 December, a political party came to power again. Now we watch the ACC's helplessness. At last on 4 February the prime minister said that they would reform the ACC. She complained that the ACC controlled politics instead of corruption. It

harassed many innocent people. It also created minus two & minus one.

So, to ensure its independence, accuracy & accountability, it needs reform. After this speech of the prime minister Dr. Mozaffar Ahmed told the BBC that with this speech the ACC would lose its independence.

As an independent & constitutional entity we think the ACC will not work for any particular party.

Hope the government will act soon. It is our demand. Corruption must be controlled. We want a change... Mahfuzur Rahman Manik IER, University of Dhaka

Community radio

I would like to extend my

heartiest felicitations to

Bangladesh NGOs' Network

for Radio and

Communication (BNNRC) for

bringing out the "Handbook:

Community Radio for Good

Governance and

Development" (in Bangla

"Shushashon O Unnayane

Community Radio" which is

indeed an important step

towards initiating and popu-

larising community radio in

Bangladesh. It may be men-

tioned here that BNNRC has

been playing a pioneering role

for introducing community

Community Radio is a

dissemination, awareness

creation, and motivational

nity education, agricultural

extension, and political

awareness-building. The

community radio can accom-

plish the following goals as

postulated in the Handbook:-

-Alleviation of extreme pov-

-Universal primary education.

-Gender equity and women

-Lowering infant mortality

-Controlling AIDS, Malaria

Ensuring environmental

-Global development partner-

The Chief Executive Officer

of BNNRC in his forwarding

note of the Handbook has

expressed his firm hope that

the Community Radio will

soon start its transmission in

Bangladesh as the voices of

mentioned here that the

government of the People's

Republic of Bangladesh has

already announced the "Com-

erty and hunger.

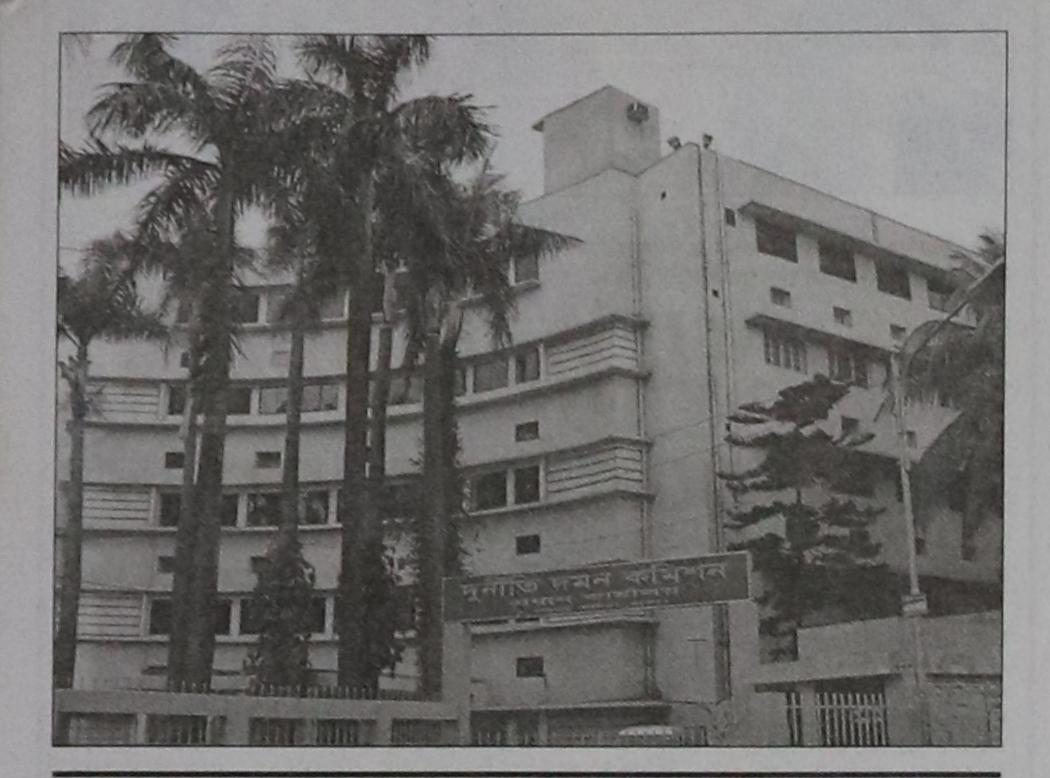
empowerment.

and other diseases.

sustainability.

tool for promoting commu-

radio in our country.



#### Oppressed RMG workers

A caption with photo published in the back page of The Daily Star of February 8 has appalled me. I came to know from the story of the report that the female garments workers of a factory at Banani in Dhaka are not allowed to use sandals during their lunch break so that they cannot go far away. It is very tough and tormenting to walk barefoot on the rough pavements. The factory authorities argue that if the workers are not allowed sandals, they will return to their work in time! Such type of treatment is very barbaric and inhuman. We all condemn this strongly. This behaviour reminds us of the infernal days of slavery. We know that the garments workers contribute a lot to national economy. They toil to keep the economy stable. But unfortunately they are treated very badly. They do not get their dues. Their salary is very poor and even they do not get their salary in time. Sometimes they need to take to the streets to realize their wages. The working conditions are not conducive at all. Actually, they work in sweat shops. The owners as well as the government do not address their problems sincerely. They are always neglected. Actually, the owners need to ensure their rights to enhance their productivity that will be a win-win situation for the workers and the owners of the factories. The NGOs and human rights groups should come forward

in this regard. Before concluding, I would request the authorities to probe the above mentioned incident and bring the culprits to book to deter such type of human rights violation. Molla Mohammad Shaheen

Lecturer in English Leading University, Sylhet

## Stinky water

Last week I had to go to Dhaka. As a newcomer to the city, I was able to notice the strange smell of the drinking water. Though I had access to the water supplied by the WASA, I had to drink it with my nose closed. It was boiled water, but it stank! I don't know how the rest of the millions of citydwellers manage to put up with this unbearable stuff.

It has been reported in the media that underground pipes have developed cracks and filthy water of sewer lines is mingling with the drinking water of pipelines. Consequently, the citizens of the capital are made to use smelly water--a smell that will remind you of stinky insects like cockroach!

Thanks to our apathy to the environment we have done great damage to the environment .The elements -- air, water and soil -- are polluted to such a point that is beyond imagination.

We hope the present government will do the needful to solve the problem. Zabed Wali Pahartali, Chittagong

# World order

Margaret Thatcher once asked British Parliament to support the Gulf War and any other US steps unconditionally, because the US was behind them during the Falkland war. Yes, that was the baseline philosophy of western "democratic" thinking. Indirectly she was asking to unite the axis of devils and nullify the UN. Now Sarkozy is joining them, coming from the country of Voltaire, Rousseau and

Well, you are fighting with your shadows created by you. Both Saddam and Bin Laden were best friends as long they were fighting Islamic Iran and Russia, who are reluctant to give their oil and other commodity to you.

Why are we upset?

The Kurdistan, Kashmir and Palestine problems have been created by the West. Now they are sermonising them.

Both the WTO and the WB have been created by the West and Asian countries are now on the brink of famine and hunger with per capita protein consumption below 30gm daily. Weak countries like Bangladesh are being pressurised to buy their hybrid seeds, non elected governments are pressurised to withdraw subsidies in fertilisers without any backup plan of

helping farmers. Stop exporting your democracy to poor countries!

The US foreign and economic policies need to be turned 180 degree. Dr Karim

GP. Australia

#### Toll collectors at DU!

Rakib's Ahmed's front-page report on 10 February is indeed a shame for this premier education institution. It represents the low level that we have reached; when criminal activities become part of university life! The Hon. Prime Minister being an ex-student herself should see that such things at the university are stopped once and for all.

As an ex-student (!950-54); words fail me to describe the

anguish I feel. We have really reached the rock bottom when criminals and fake students are enrolled in the university! The government must investigate this matter; and have to remove all such undesirable elements from the campus. One wonders if such things are not being engineered from outside by people out to tarnish the government's image by encouraging such criminal activities and damage the law and order situation.

The matter must be taken in all seriousness at the soonest and the progress of the investigation reported in newspapers.

A very worried citizen Dhaka

munity Radio installation, broadcast, and managing Policy 2008".

We sincerely hope that , Bangladesh will very soon enter the modern ICT arena through initiation of community radio network in the rural areas. Let Community Radio emerge as an effective media for information dissemination plus non-formal education for community as well as national development in Bangladesh.

Professor M Zahidul Haque Chairman

Department of Agricultural Extension & Information System, SAU, Dhaka

#### Roads in bad shape

We are facing a lot of problems in our locality. In the rainy season the roads get damaged with mud and sometimes they are flooded with water. And some roads need to be repaired.

But the government is not taking any action in this respect. This is not only a problem of my own area, this is a common problem of Dhaka city.

We, the students of Mastermind, urge the newly elected government to take urgent steps to set things right.

Syed Ishtiaque Hossain Student of Mastermind Uttara, Dhaka

#### Full moon

Did you see the full moon overruling the blanket of mist in this wintry sky accompanied by flee fleecy cloud? Unlike the sun, the moon is not heavy with masculinity, much less temerity? The moon of today has

passion and affection like a languor queen of a monarch who very rarely tends to come out of her bower in revealing clothes to hand out her diktat. The moon has ruled this night, as it is, not by force but a mutual understanding. The submissiveness of the vast paddy field, consent of the resting woods, stillness of water body, the limitless horizon; flock of nocturnal birds, all of them agree to this goddess of night who seems to have kissed a chunk of land more brightly as she gets brighter and brighter.

I come to be lost in the modern-day information labyrinth of a land of strangers! At that point comes call of my friend. I can't help but write. The manner she speaks her ebullient words, it resonates like the songs of birds.

## **Transitissue**

Before deciding on giving transit to India we should analyse the issue very carefully.

We should realise why India needs transit, our advantages as well as disadvantages.

Why India needs transit: Firstly, India is isolated from the North-East India because of the location of Bangladesh. Bangladesh stands right in the middle of these two parts. To reach these North Eastern states, Indian vehicles have to travel between 1400 and 1650 km. from West Bengal and if Bangladesh allowed them transit the distance would come down to just over 700

the rural people. It may be Secondly, to fulfil the growing capitalist demand and to develop the trade market, India needs to use the

resources of the north-eastern states which are rich in natural resources.

Thirdly, India needs this transit for their strategic

Finally, besides the economic and military reasons one of the most important reasons of this transit is the national security and stability of India. Advantages:

i) If the Indo-Bangladesh transit is established then Bangladesh will get 300/400 crore taka per year from tariff. ii) By properly utilising Chittagong port Bangladesh may be benefited.

iii) Infrastructure development may occur if Indian investors come here and employment opportunities are created.

Disadvantages: i) Easy access to these states (seven sisters) through Bangladesh means too much pressure on our weak infrastructure (particularly on roods and culverts).

ii) Transit can cause strategic danger to Bangladesh. If India supplies arms and ammunition to halt the problems of 'Seven Sisters' then the people of those areas may become hostile towards Bangladesh.

iii) There might be a health concern as truck drivers of India will pass through the transit route.

iv) Many environment problems can occur for giving transit to India. The vehicles will cause sound and air pollution.

v) Illegal arms, drugs and human trafficking may increase.

Lastly, Bangladesh will lose a strong market in the Seven Sisters.

Our Commerce Minister Faruk Khan has said that transit is primarily an economic issue, rather than a political issue but Farhad Mazar dismisses the idea that transit is merely an economic issue.

According to, Prof, Imtiaz Ahmed, instead of being reactive, as in responding only when they start taking, we should be proactive. We should call India for a meeting and ask it for transit to Nepal and Bhutan and even Pakistan. We should ask India to reduce cross-border smuggling.

Md. Shariful Islam Dept. of International Relations

University of Dhaka

## **Gaza situation**

As the Gaza issue slowly begins to sidestep from the headlines, one can't stop contemplating over the tragedy that has struck the Ummah. There are some fundamental lessons to be learned from the massacre in Gaza.

Seeing on our TV sets, the catastrophe unleashed by Israel on Palestinians, most of us have undoubtedly had similar feelings. We all felt angered by the atrocities being committed and felt the urge to take immediate action to help those suffering.

However, if we are to look back, this is not the first time Muslims have shared these sentiments. Our sentiments were alike, when Afghanistan was being bombed, when Iraq was being invaded, and when Lebanon was being torched. In fact it is not the first time that the sufferings in Palestine have sent shivers across the Muslim world.

occur, we find that Muslims realize their personal obliga-

# Hasina and Obama

US President Barack Hussein Obama has emerged as a world leader at a time when the world is desperately looking for a worthy leadership less to talk about the Americans.

Obama has assumed office and started his arduous journey; Americans as well as the people across the globe are looking forward to a change change that Obama pledged in the pre-election campaign. Pressures of expectations are sky-high.

At home, our Prime and feels the pressures of Minister Sheikh Hasina has been elected by the people in a landslide victory, with almost same kind of hopes and aspirations on the part of the sources by stopping the Hasina's administration people, as the previous unprecedented decline in it has become imperative BNP-led four party coalition regime left the coun- eign policies in a way that reshuffle their course of try in a state of debris in reveals the core fact that action and implement terms of corruption in his administration almost all the depart- devised things/plans ments of the government beforehand. And by con-



SHAFIQUL ISLAM KAJOL / DRIKNEWS

and very poor governance almost a failed one. Sheikh Hasina's government also knows expectations.

Obama has started taking difficult decisions to salvage their sinking economy, creating job jobs and the critical for-

trast, Sheikh Hasina's government, though has shown some dynamism in forming the cabinet, appears to be stumbling onto some vital issues --they, as it seems, didn't devise their course of action beforehand.

Now, for Sheikh that they recompose and their plans accordingly. Rafiqul Islam Rime Agrabad, Chittagong

brothers in distress, and this often translates into many types of actions. For example, appeals are made to the United Nations, marches are done to express solidarity, and calls for boycotts are made with full vigour. Unfortunately, as days roll by, a usual decline in this eagerness is witnessed. It is of utmost significance,

therefore, that Muslims direct their efforts towards a path that provides a permanent solution to the issue. Otherwise, sincere efforts, if directed towards a path that gives no lasting solution, will serve as mere channels for releasing the pressure on Muslims, and are likely to end up being wasted. Before we dwell on the

solution, it becomes imperative that we identify the problem, and subsequently the barriers that prevent the solution.

The Ummah today is blessed with abundant natural resources, oil, natural gas, gold and uranium etc. Its geography covers many of the world's strategic locations. In terms of numbers its strength is self evident. And collective emotions resonate throughout the Ummah, on all issues that have Islamic significance. Moreover, there is an abundance of self-less men, who dedicate their lives to the betterment of others. Furthermore, it has the military might, which has the potential to face any other power in the world.

In short we must realize that the problem is not lack of resources or technology.

Coming back to the Gaza issue, we witnessed, that while Israel unleashed its reign of terror on civilians, Egypt's ruler ordered ceiling of the borders, preventing even medical aid to cross through. All this while, Egypt's army, as well as the armies of the rest of the Muslim world were kept stationed in their barracks by Whenever such incidents the Muslim rulers. A stark contrast indeed to the fact that these same rulers eagerly tion towards helping their send troops - under the the 20,000 or so discarded

umbrella of UN - to serve the interests of western imperial powers in Congo or else-So, what prevents the liber-

ation of oppressed Muslims in occupied lands is the present status quo(fortified by UN) which keeps the Ummah divided into petty nation states, and the present rulers, who blatantly and shamelessly side with the oppres-

Muslims have to unite to face the oppressors. Engr. Sharique Naeem One-mail

#### Those Bangladeshi-Americans

I'm writing in support of what was written in The Daily Star recently about the ex-U.S. president George W. Bush with a little caveat. It is true that Bush left the office not only with the lowest approval rating, but also with a lasting damage done to the United States and the world community, in general. Particularly, he has done more damage to the Islamic countries including Bangladesh than any other US president, except, probably, Richard Nixon opposing our liberation war in 1971. Ironically, it is the US Muslim community that brought Bush an arrogant, unintelligent and ignorant individual - to the White House. It is still debated among the American Muslim community that had 537 Florida Muslims including Bangladeshi-Americans, not voted for this mediocre Texan, the US Supreme Court could not have made him the president. After a series of flawed recounts, 537 votes separated Bush from Gore, but we may never know the actual number. Although the Democratic party contender Al Gore won the popular vote in spite of the Muslim rejection, he lost the presidency due to a controversial loss in the electoral

college votes resulting from a

number of unfavourable and

unfortunate events including

butterfly ballots, the irregularities in counting the votes through entire Florida and, ultimately, the refusal of the five supreme court justices to recount the controversial Florida county votes. In the aftermath of the election, the first independent recount was conducted by The Miami Herald and USA Today. They found that if all votes where the intent of the voter was clear were counted properly, Gore would have won, using any consistent standard for 'clear intent of the voter'. That's a different story. The main reason that the

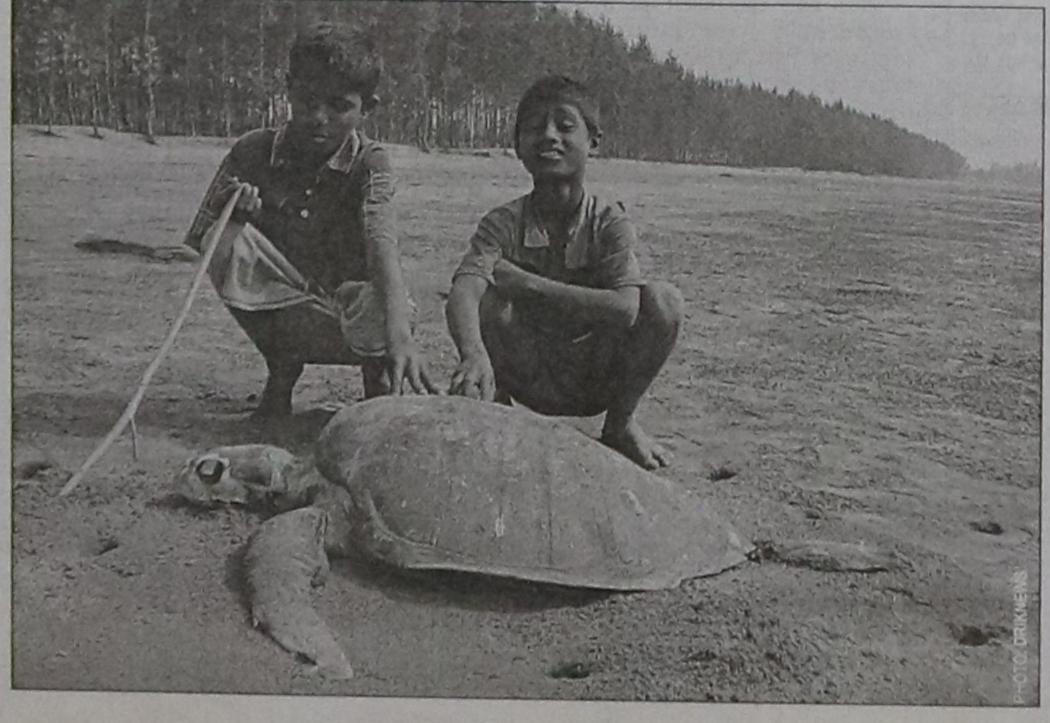
US Muslims voted for Bush was Al Gore's running mate Joe Libermann being a Jew, although officially many Muslims deny it. The Muslims were motivated more by anger and hatred towards the Jews than reason and historical evidences including the fact that Bill Clinton and Al Gore had almost achieved a treaty between the PLO and Israel. It's not quite clear why the US Muslims voted overwhelmingly for Bush, whose precampaign speeches were full of pro-Israeli views. In his Florida pre-campaign speeches, in order to woo Jewish votes, Bush vowed to move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem the day he is sworn in. He would never let Jerusalem be divided, as he promised wearing a scalp cap at the West wall in Jerusalem during a pre-campaign trip to Israel. He also expressed his disgust for the PLO and vowed never to meet Arafat, a promise he kept to the utter dismay

of the Muslim community. In retrospect, many would agree, particularly the Muslim community, that the world would have been a better place without Bush in the White House and, perhaps, 537 Bangladeshi-American living in Florida could have made the difference if they were not motivated by prejudice and hatred, but by reason. Ashraf Z Khan, Ph.D

Morrisville

USA

# Dead sea turtles



This happens every year although the frequency of the sea turtle deaths has increased in last couple of years. These turtles visit our coastal areas, beaches to accomplish their biological needs - to lay eggs and ensure their future progeny. But ALAS! What we humen beings are doing is wiping out these harmless creatures.

In one of my articles (DS-130908 Conservation Engineering-Saving Marine Turtles) I wrote about the available technology that can be modified to suit local conditions and approaches to help reduce the unwanted mortalities of these magnificent migrants.

Bangladesh is a signatory to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation

and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA). It is our obligation to the international community to provide safety to these sea turtles. I would urge that the relevant government agencies - the Forest Department, Department of Environment under the MOEF and the Department of Fisheries under the MOFL should liase with the Coast Guard (under the Ministry of Defence) to take effective measures to curb this illegal killing of sea turtles, particularly during the winter months (November -February). SMA Rashid, PhD Chief Executive Officer **CARINAM** 

Adabor, Mohammadpur

Dhaka