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.

This is in reference to the letter

posted by Mr. Hasanat Alamqir

about privatising DU. The very

thought of the subject is appalling.

mean no offence to Mr. Alamgir, but I

don't think that privatisation could be

expensive. Not everybody in Ban-

gladesh is rich enough to spend so

much money on putting people

Furthermore, I think that where

there is a will, there is a way. I study

in IBA, and it is very much a part of

DU. But we do not have any politics,

and we do not have any session

jams. Even when we are forcefully

closed because of problems in the

University, we make up for our lost

problems may not be in

privatisation, but rather in strict

discipline for the students. Every

year IBA produces the top business

graduates and post-graduates in

Bangladesh. I think DU can very

I think Mr. Hasnat Alamgir's pro-

posal (February 2) to privatise the

Dhaka University is quite rational.

The University is located in the best

area of Dhaka, owns many magnifi-

cent buildings and acres of valuable

land but most of its departments'

output is zero and has become a

burden for the nation. In spite of

doing research most of its teachers

are engaged in petty politics! For a

long time the University area has

been turned into a notorious crimi-

nal zone and a centre of political

One US educated economist

who has done an excellent research

on economic aspects of Dhaka

University, says that the education

cost of every student is about 3-4

lacs taka, which, at the end of the

day, the poor nation has to pay! Do

the students and the teachers

Now free higher education is no

more accepted. Higher education

should be costly and for meritorious

students. Even the British govern-

ment, the pioneer of public service

concept, is going towards imple-

menting higher tuition fees on all

university students at any cost.

Under the proposed arrangement

students would be allowed to get

loans from banks and would be

required to pay back after getting

job. This system could also be tried

in Bangladesh. If Dhaka University

would face the same fate of

remains as it is I think one day

Strange coincidence

Almost to an orchestrated cue with

George Bush's State of the Union,

Tony Blair started to sing Iraq's

connection to Al-Qaeda. The world

community is supposed to swallow

without question what these two

honourable gentlemen wish to have

it believe, and do so with gratitude

for being given such privileged

How cond

Some of us have heard this song

before, for we recall the very able

US Defence Secretary had been for

the past two months in the habit of

harping the same tune of Al-Qaeda

connection. He however enlight-

ened his audience with clear evi-

dence of that link or where and how

done numerous inspections across

Iraq but have so far found no hard

evidence. These inspectors are the

eyes and ears of the UN mandated

inspection regime. Even Mr. Blix's

report on 27 January failed to cite

The 108 UN inspectors have

that connection was.

Adamjee Jute Mill.

University of Sheffield, UK

Manzur Elahi

Therefore, the answer to our

Firstly, private universities are

an answer to our problems.

through a private university.

time, with extra work.

well do the same

IBA, Dhaka University

Ayesha Tariq

conspiracies'.

realise this fact?

Push-in

I read with serious concern the continuous escalation of border conflict with India. The matter needs urgent attention by both countries at the highest level, before it becomes ugly. The conflict can be resolved peacefully. The Indian claim sounds extremely exaggerated. Bangladesh's assertion that there has not been any migration to India at all also does not sound entirely true.

In order to break the deadlock I suggest the following. It is in the best interest of both India and Bangladesh to resolve the conflict peacefully and amicably

Let India and Bangladesh agree and meet and select a panel of linguistics, who can ascertain based on the accent and dialect where these people in question hail from. Since Bangladeshi dialect of Bangla is significantly different from West Bengal dialect, it would be easy to identify their original residence.

In the meantime, International Red Cross should intervene to address the plight of the stranded people in the conflict. M. Faruque, USA

It amazes me that while Mr Y. Sinha clearly defiles the image of Bangladesh in the media by pointing out that Bangladesh is a state that cannot take care of its people, whereas our politicians are taking a swing at one another.

There is not a single sign of unity among our politicians even at times of serious crisis. When will they ous nine months before the 'Operation Clean Heart' stared 2460 people were murdered. 720 women were raped (131 died), a journalist was killed and many manhandled. Killing of children, random toll collection and looting public and private properties became regular than ever.

We know well how criminals and mastaans are patronised and protected by corrupt politicians and the police. The politicians, intellectuals and journalists have discussed these matters repeatedly and it is clear from their discussions that lack of good governance is responsible for corruption.

However, after the withdrawal of the army rate of criminal activities have increased again. We agree that the Joint Drive could never be the ultimate step for restoring law and order, but the common people want to live in peace and without fear. For the betterment of the country I hope the people and the government will work together and act responsibly.

Fatima Z Islam, Dhanmondi,

Much have been said about 'The Joint Force Indemnity Ordinance' that has been promulgated on January 9 legitimising all acts, right or wrong, committed by the Joint Force during the period from October 16 to January 9, leaving people of all spheres enraged and dumbfounded. There is not a single person who claims to be civilised and other persons in respect of any act done by him in connection with the national liberation struggle or the maintenance or restoration of order in any area in Bangladesh".

This article provides just two grounds (i) national liberation struggle and (ii) maintenance or restoration of order to indemnity any person. It is easily comprehensible that the government has resorted to the later ground i.e. the plea of maintenance or restoration of order to indemnify the Joint Force. But that is not sustainable because the phrase "maintenance or restoration of order" needs to be interpreted from the judicious point of view and in the light of space, time and context. The plea of 'maintenance or restoration of order' is not applicable to the general/normal circumstances like the present one. It is applicable to special circumstances e.g. mutiny or separatist movement. The joint force was not deployed in such a situation. Even the government

never claimed so. (b) From the very inception of the joint drive the government explained that it was working under the existing law just to aid the regular law-enforcing agency.

(c) When hue and cry arose due to the death in custody the government unequivocally asserted that any wrong done by the joint force would be investigated and tried according to the existing law.

(d) If the government had any plan to be under the umbrella of Article 46 of the constitution to indemnity the

Bangladesh cricket

This is in response to Alpana Alim's letter regarding Bangladesh cricket (February 5).

I myself quite agree with her what she said about cricket in our country

We just cannot put an excuse whenever we lose a match. This has become the habit of the players and the cricket board officials. It is sad that we lost the match against Namibia. Whatever it is, I think, it is too early for us to get the Test status. We are not at all in a position to play Test matches.

I wonder what would be our team's performance in the upcoming World Cup. May God bless them! Minhaj Ahmed

Uttara, Dhaka

It is my response to the letter of Ms. Alpana Alim. I do understand that when our team plays a match let that be against Namibia or Pakistan the citizens of our country await eagerly to see them perform better overtime. Unfortunately that is not the case every time. But we cannot put too much expectation on the line, as the team is still an apprentice in this game of maestro. What we should really do is give our boys a bit of time to take the hold of the

game. We should not think of any team that as a minnow as in cricket you never know what is next. If we all keep on pointing out the negative points then I am afraid the boys will lose confidence which is a crucial need in the field. I think

a little pat on the back will

make the situation much eas-

ier for the team as the World Cup is not a baby's doll play. In the World Cup we have seen teams like India, Pakistan etc who are mammoths in the game whereas Bangladesh is just a novice. As for the Test status everyone in the world does not get that status. We should be proud that we have reached such a milestone. We should be a bit more patient and remember that Rome was not built in a day.

Khalid Rahman Dhaka

I am concerned at the discouragement meted out by some of your correspondents to the boys of the Bangladesh Cricket X1. I have a sugges-

means of encouragement.

stimulate them is the founding of a Bangladesh Women's Cricket Team. When I was at my girls' public school in the UK, in the 1950s, we played cricket every summer term and took it very seriously. In

tion to make of a possible occasionally share with the lads playing cricket on the field Maybe what the young men in Lalmatia that I cross every of our cricket team need to day, walking between my flat and my school. Occasionally, when I demonstrate the difference between bowling and 'throwing', they invite me to join them, but I decline. At my age, I might strain something.

The fear that a women's



Good luck for the World Cup

fact, the only person I have team might defeat them may stumps in 3 balls was a 16 was destined to become a PE teacher. I became Vice-Captain of my House, a fact I

ever seen flatten three middle be just the 'encouragement' that our Test side needs to help year-old friend of mine who them to improve their standards Angela Robinson (Rev Mrs)

The British School in Dhaka

"My country right or wrong"

Megasthenes' column 'My country right or wrong' (January 25) is a date with history, not of long ago through. The old-timers were agog reminiscing the days when the famous phrase uttered by the then President Iskander Mirza of Pakistan, 'My country right or wrong' made waves in the patriotic hearts of his fellow citizens. To many it was a revelation that the phrase did not originate with Mirza.

As indeed a heady cocktail of shady politics, palace intrigues, amorous adventure coloured the life of the Major General turned pseudo-

learn?

and order

Riyadh Hossain, Austin, USA

Joint drive and law

Our attention has been drawn to the

report "Crimes creeping in" (Janu-

ary 21). People of the country have

witnessed the improvement of law

and order situation during the 'Oper-

ation Clean Heart'. A report pub-

lished in September 2002, by the

Bureau of Human Rights Bangla-

desh (BHRB), tells that in the previ-

Interestingly, as Megasthenes' column has it, Mirza's innocuous compliment about sartorial elegance was the opening line to win the hands of Nahid Mirza, his second wife. His romantic overture for the second 'Kill' was, however, shot in flames before it could spell any disaster to her marital bliss.

The portrayals of matters, however, private in nature. contribute to the understanding of history at its most liberal. The noted American thinker, Ralph Waldo Emerson says, "All public facts are



believes in democracy, rule of law,

human rights and supremacy of

peoples' will support such kind of

law. Therefore, I vehemently

oppose the ordinance and urge the

government along with the leaders

and policy makers of the 4-party

alliance to ponder over the following

a) Article 46 of our constitution does

not authorise the government to

make such an ordinance in the

present context. The said article

provides indemnity to 'any per-

son in the service of the republic or

to be individualised, all private facts are to be generalised. Then at once History becomes fluid and true, and Biography deep and sublime".

In his chameleonic talent, President Mirza also proved himself a 'superb actor' whenever movie camera was on to film his public engagements, so vouched the film buffs of

The accompanying photograph shows: Major-General Iskander Mirza, governorgeneral of Pakistan laying the foundation stone of the Karachi Municipal Corporation's Clifton Beach Development scheme on June 21. 1956. Begum Iskander Mirza (Left) and Mr. AT Naqvi, Chief Commissioner of Karachi (2nd from left) look on.

Meagasthenes deserves gratitude for his excellent piece resonating with the history.

Syed Badrul Hoque Lalmatia. Dhaka

ioint force, they should have made a declaration in this respect that the situation was beyond its control and they were to take extra-ordinary action to 'maintain or restore order'. But the government did not do so. On the contrary, they pledged to do justice in respect of any violation of law by the joint force. So the government has neither legal nor moral basis to promulgate such an ordi-

Rezaul Karim Mohammadpur, Dhaka **Privatising DU?**

physical evidence though he had alluded to a few speculations and conjectures

If the US and the UK have evidence, the logical thing to do is to give those to the inspectors who are on the ground to verify. The fact that these are withheld does lend doubts on the veracity of such information. From the beginning the inspection regime has been under heavy pressure by the US and the UK governments and it is now plainly ntolerable.

As to weapons, we heard Mr. Blair in the Parliament debate stoutly protesting arms trade; yet US and UK are two major arms exporters in the world. Fact is US alone is hiding a vast arsenal of WMD which it refuses to destroy even though that was required under the ABM Treaty with Russia. That Treaty has now been unilaterally scuttled by the US. The US has vast store of chemical and biological weapons not under any inspection that could be unleashed and could

How safe the world is remains an open question when the US is on record of having actually used some of these in the past.

Both US and the UK are ardent preachers of democracy; the lecture on democracy never stops. Now Mr. Bush so piously wishes to "liberate" the people of Iraq and might next select other candidate countries too. It seems that these two leaders of democracy are in a contest honing their skills in "marketing" a war that would not sell on its merit or Hussain. Dhaka

Welcome Ataus Samad

It is gratifying to find the senior journalist and columnist Mr Ataus Samad joining the bandwagon of The Daily Star columnists. His writings so far confined to Bengali dailies and weeklies will now quench the thirst of English reader-

His first of the fortnightly column "When actions beget suffering" mirrored almost every national crises and problems, gave birth to apparently inept governance of the BNP-Jamaat administration, which according to Mr Samad, put them on uncomfortable edge, at least when it came to US's inclusion of Bangladesh in the terror-risk list. He has enumerated few of the

decisions of the govt. that are only adding to the people's misery, and resentment at least on one count, Indemnity Ordinance to safeguard the fall-outs of Operation Clean Heart. And he also reminded the govt. of its aberration from its election pledges. In fact he took to no subterfuge to bring home the govt. of the discontents smouldering in the minds of the people that may make the govt. pay for in the long run. So he has referred to the recent election results of Narayangonj and Magura going in favour of AL. A cautionary note from a well-wisher

While accusing the international media like FEER, Wall Street Journal, Time Magazine for damaing of our image abroad culminating in our falling into US's terror-list, he has not spared AL lending to that cause

For the last few months people saw the govt.'s crack-down on the opposition leaders and activists and also on columnists/journalists holding opposite views; the eminent historian and DU Professor Muntasir Mamun being one of them. Never before had the country seen a democratic govt. stifling the democratic right to freedom of speech so rudely.

It would put Mr Samad better and

fairer if his article that has all the resonance of national interest had pointed the above. His sharp eyes and pen should not have missed it. A H Dewan

Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka

Fuel price hike

The present government has already completed its one-year tenure and the government's interest to increase revenues from the internal resources has been noticeable from the beginning. They have extended the area of taxation in the fiscal budget 2002-2003 and ncreased the gas price in manifold as well as fuel price referring to the price hike of international oil market.

The government possibly does not understand the problem they are creating for the common people because of fuel price hike. The price of almost everyday essential commodity have already gone up due to the earlier price adjustment dogma created by the Energy Ministry. Being a citizen of Bangladesh I

urge the present government to reconsider the fuel price structure as it is connected with all of the essentials of our everyday life. The lawmakers must remember that the government is not a private limited company whose only concern is to make profit

Nur Mohammad Ansari M Phil Researcher, DU

INS registration for Bangladeshis

This refers to Mr. Sheff's letter from Pennsylvania, USA, published in your Jan 27 issue. His allegation about corrupt practices in the Bangladesh Embassy and Consulates in USA is a serious matter.

Possibly this could be the root cause of bringing forward the registration and immigration process for a fact then it overshadows all the other statements and comments made by Bangladeshis in or outside Bangladesh including the Opposition Leader. Why is the government so silent

Bangladeshis. I believe that if this is

about this issue? We should have a transparent response from them. Would Foreign Minister who has just returned from his visit to USA come out with the fact and shed some light on the matter? S A Mansoor

Gulshan, Dhaka

started blaming each other after the imposition of the National Security Entry Exit Registration for Bangladeshi citizens in the US.

am surprised at the way we have

Why should the victims take the blame for deliberate acts of discrimination by the US Government? Just because a man of 16 plus bears a Muslim name, he must be quarantined politically and economically. This takes us back to Biblical times when King Herod ordered the identification of sons born to Jewish families. Nearer our times, Hitler's programmes ghettoised the Jews in large parts of Europe. Extermination was a later strategy, but initially the isolation was to deprive them of all opportunities and civil liberties. Individual Japanese residents in the US were detained during the Second World War, because their country of origin was at war with the US.

But all this was before the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, declaring the equality of all men. Is discrimination now sanctified in the unipolar world order? Hameeda Hossain

Dhaka

"Women's football"

In response to Munasir Kamal (February 03) can you please define an "Ultra-modern deviant" woman for me? I, being male, frequently flout "social norms". Does that make me deviant or is it reserved only for women?

Is expressing individual rights and freedom of expression (physical as well as verbal) an example of deviance? Yahya, USA

I am responding to Mrs Angela Robinson's two points.

One. The "turn-on" factor. This factor, I think, depends on the culture. Much more provocative dresses can be found at street corners at just about any streets in the West. In comparison, football costumes would be considered quite conservative. However, in a culture such as Bangladesh where leg showing is not considered a good thing yet, it can draw a lot of unwanted attention from a lot of unscrupulous men. To prove my point, may I very respectfully ask any grown-up women who would be willing to wear a short to wear and walk any street in Netrokona and have the feel for yourself! In Dhaka you may be OK. But in Netrokona? I am not so sure.

Two. "Men don't have to watch women playing". I have watched many TV talk shows in the USA. I remember in one talk show a few years ago, it was about porn actors and actresses facing the usual American TV viewers. Interestingly porn actors and actresses threw the same sentence in favour of their point of view. "If you don't like it, don't watch it" was their collective response. I personally happen to believe it's a flawed argument and also depends on where in the world we are talking. I am sure, you too, Mrs. Robinson, do not agree with the viewpoint of the porn makers. Football is

not porn, however it is the argument that is so sarcastically similar. We have a long way to go to get our women freed from the so-

called cultural bondage.

Football playing, I think, is a wrong topic on this subject. Let us encourage ourselves to send our girls and daughters to school in large numbers. Let us empower our women with education. Let us not throw any more acid to them to disfigure them for the rest of their lives. Let us eliminate those thugs who throw acid at women. Sakib Jamal

Moraine, OH, USA

I write in response to all the letters the readers have sent regarding "Women's Football"

Well I'd like to draw out a few points before I start. Firstly we are a Muslim nation, and being a Muslim we should be aware of the fact that our religion allows women folk, like men, to pursue own earnings, engage in day today activities and women are in no way deprived from the creations and bounties of God. Now if that implies going to universities, or working in an office or teaching or even playing sports, they are entitled as Muslims to do so, whether our "religious leaders and preachers" like it or not. The reason why it is not a norm to play soccer, or for womenfolk to go out with normal shirts or pants is because of us, the male gender. We are reminded by God to "avert our glances". And that is something men don't do. On the other hand womenfolk are told to "dress in modesty". Now I think every reader will be aware that a "burkha" or even a "saree" can be worn in an immodest manner, whereas shirts and trousers can also be worn modestly.

The people who "sat" as a protest to cancel the match in my opinion can be categorized as fundamentalist. As they were more concerned on what the footballers were wearing rather than on the game itself.

Often in "Khutbas" I get to hear that 12-yr-old girls should not be allowed to go without covering their head etc. But never do I hear the 'Imam' saying, that outside there are so many beggars lined up, give charity with your hearts content, feed a poor person everyday, try to compete with each other in goodness etc. Thus in spite of being Muslims, we are so not Muslims, as we

hardly do what we are told to do in our religion.

Kashif Mahmood, Toronto, Canada Personally I believe most socially conscious women, being aware of the state of society we currently live in, would probably refrain from playing football in public. That having been said, those who do wish to play soccer, or any other sport for that matter, should unquestionably be allowed to do so. In the article that was published on January 23, it was apparent that the women were not

cancelling their game out of their personal sensibilities, but out of

fear of religious fundamentalist groups that had been protesting If the reason for which some of us detest the notion of giving



Furore over female football

women equality in regards to sports is religion, let fundamentalists know that in the Qur'an, preceding instructions regarding the dress code and model moral conduct of women, there are verses instructing the men to "lower their gaze and guard their modesty. God is well acquainted with all that they do."

If women seek to play sports in any arena for the purpose of maintaining physical fitness or simply for enjoyment, it should not be them suffering because of the moral bankruptcy of certain men. It is the men who attend these games and cause trouble that should be dealt with sternly.

The issue of this particular soccer tournament is merely an

example of a much bigger problem. Too often traditions and even religion are being used as covers for subjugation and social exploitation. I, and probably many of the other readers commenting in this column sense that the protest against women expressing their freedoms is not so much out of love for religion or culture, but out of fear that the old notions of male dominance in society may be threatened. This incident reminds us that we have far to go in recognising the rights of our people, especially our women; and even further to go in implementing those ideals. Omar Siddiquee

State University of New York, USA

Rev. Mrs. Angela Robinson has nailed the problem of our society right on the head, in her letter in Women's Football. In our society, we have failed to teach our males, the modest behaviour towards women in general. Instead of rectifying male's inappropriate behaviour in public or private, we have put the onus on women by either covering them or limiting their access in the open. The reason women in our society are confined, be it in sports, social functions, is due to the fear of inappropriate behaviour from the ogling men. If we understand Islam, we are supposed to control our gaze as well as our mind towards women. If we cannot do that while women is in sports or normal activity, we are defying the teachings of our religion.

In response to Mr. Alam's claim, that foreigners opt for lower salary and that is the reason they get jobs in USA, is a true insult to the talents of our country. Any foreigner who gets a job in a US company goes through a process where his temporary work permit is processed towards permanent (Green Card). The application goes to State employment exchange where the company has to show the prevailing wages for that particular job skill. So, they just cannot arbitrarily set the salary. I am sure there are exceptions to those. The human resources group in all the reputable companies is there to monitor such activities.

There are thousands of Bangladeshi who come to study in USA and join the workforce after that. From my experience, they are very qualified, on the least to compete with the local workers not on the basis of lower salary bur on the basis of their competence. M. Hassan

Plano, TX, USA