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.

"BSTI, Condensed Milk and Court Rul-

Four producers have been producing condensed milk from 1992 and using certification marks of BSTI on containers since it was made mandatory in 1997. Producers have been marketing their products smoothly and uninterrupted till BSTI, our Rip Van Winkle woke up in August 2002. BSTI carried out test on samples collected at random from the market. Test revealed presence of vegetable fat in place of milk fat. Government banned the production for violating set standards and terms of license on 23 January 2003. This infuriated the producers. They misconstrued the government action with sinister commercial statement. They even alleged why BSTI did not intervene long before.

The issue is quite alarming. How could these producers manage to use ingredients of low cost and low quality in place of milk fat infringing set standards for last 11 years? Who knows whether these substitutes qualify for human consumption? In fact these milk producers have deceived the consumers. It is alleged that they are now lobbying with influential quarters to use vegetable fat, caked palm oil etc in place of milk fat. The Government must not give in to their intrigue rather should take stern action for violating government set standards and license code. We also solicit action against BSTI for remaining indifferent in detecting deceitful activities of dishonest

I humbly make some observation on High Court ruling on writ petition. High Court has stayed the ban for two months and asked the Government to explain why its ban orders not to be nullified. Has the High Court been assured before its ruling that substitutes of milk fat do not constitute health hazard?

In the recent past some hardcore criminals have secured bail from High Court and have gone at large. They could be involved in all

If the cases are shelved at random, it will shatter the nation's last hopes and trust. It will result in Col. Shariff Habibur Rahman, psc (Retd.)

DU protest

Attention of Dhaka University authorities has been drawn to the editorial "BCS question paper leakage and DU admission test scandal" published in *The Daily* Star on March 2, 2003. Both the title and the contents of the editorial are misleading and do not at all reveal what actually happened in the admission test of Ga-unit of the University.

In order to dispel misgivings created in the minds of the readers it may be mentioned that admission tests for 1st year honors classes under various faculties of Dhaka University are being held for a long period in a well-recognised proceure through different units under the supervision of the honourable Deans of different faculties of the University. No question was raised ever regarding the transparency of the admission procedure of Dhaka

This year (session 2002-2003) some students made attempts to get themselves admitted into the University through forgery participating in the admission test under Ga-unit. The coordinator of the Unit and Dean of the Faculty of Business Studies could detect the fact in time and took prompt measures so that no student who adopted or the way of forgery or fraudulent practice get chance to be admitted in the University.

News items about the matter were published in various newspapers rightly and the measures taken by the University were appreciated by the public. Neither any allegation nor question about the said admission test was raised from the students concerned or from their guardians

It may also be mentioned that all precautions were taken in order to make the examination fair and transparent before holding the examination under Gha-unit and the examination was held fairly and peacefully.

Md Ashraf Ali Khan

Director (Acting) Public Relations Office Univeristy of Dhaka

Sacrificial lambs

This is in response to the letter by Mr. Mahbub ("Mockery of a law brings shame on the nation" March 3) who replies to the Editor's commentary about the Indemnity Ordinance stating that basically the army was justified in killing eople in custody for the greater good of the nation.

His exact lines were "we still feel that the nation should be ready to absorb the sacrifices". Really, Mr. Mahbub, how sacrificial would you feel if it were your son or brother who had been killed in army custody? Why does cleaning up the law and order situation have to mean deaths in custody as opposed to actual justice for criminals? We the taxpavers support our army to defend us as a nation not to indiscriminately kill people in custody in the name of law and order. Scherezad Latif

Eskaton Garden Rd, Dhaka

Where do we stand as a nation?

I have been following the news about the leakage of questions of the BCS (Bangladesh Public Service) examinations. It is a very sad thing and a bad sign for the education sector of Bangladesh. I take a step back and look at the other scenarios such as thousands of examinees of SSC, HSC, BA exams using unfair means during the exam and many being expelled, I feel really frustrated. Then there is leakage of questions of Dhaka University admission test and forgery in admission, questions of BA examinations under National University leaked and finally the leakage of BCS questions. What a

Side by side, the nation's top officials - the law and policymakers are busy blaming each other for any such incidents and failures. But taking initiative to improve the situation.

However, when someone else from inside and outside, such as TI (Transparency International) and etc. points out our unfairness, we

I do not understand as a nation where are we going? Where do we stand and what do we stand for? We do not have enough money but do we have the most important resource manpower. If we could utilise this power, build up the moral and morale of people, and grow honesty in them we could be a ifferent power altogether.

Can we not demand from our leaders, law and policy makers of the country to invest their time. talents and resources to make a sincere effort to liberate the people from these evils rather than practice unfair politics?

Leo Pereira University of Portland, USA

"IAB urge the PM to stop construction at Sangsad Bhaban"

I was extremely thrilled to read the article in your March 3 issue where the Institute of Architects, Bangladesh (IAB) has urged the PM and the government to stop illegal construction and preserve the original plan as laid out by Louis Kahn. I was happy to see that IAB, the premier body representing the architects of the country has at last taken a stand. I was further gratified that they have taken the issue a step beyond and raised it to the level of UNESCO and have all the structures be considered as part of world heritage. An international exposure of this nature, will have positive outcome for the country as a whole. It will not only create a recognition for the city which it

ICC World Cup Cricket 2003

What sort of World Cup Cricket are we watching this time? Super Sixes were conceived so that the best six teams could proceed to that special round. Teams like Australia, Pakistan and India from pool A and South Africa, West Indies and Sri Lanka from pool B were expected to progress to the Super Six round. Instead teams like Kenya, New Zealand, and probably Zimbabwe or England will get through, courtesy forfeiture of matches due to controversial venues, day-night matches (most of the teams batting second, lost), no reserve day in case of rain affected matches (South

Africa lost to both New Zealand and Sri Lanka due to rain, West Indies lost two valuable points to toothless Bangladesh, etc).

Of course non-performing team like Pakistan deserve what they have got. But my heart cries for South Africa, which, apart from being the host country and the second best team in the tournament, goes out of the World Cup just because of rain! These ridiculous factors should have been taken care of by the organisers before the tournament started.

Sharif uzzaman Choudhurv Uttara, Dhaka

richly deserves, but also develop a market for our tourist industry.

I had challenged the architect/planners of Bangladesh in my letter published in your daily on May 10, 2002 under the heading 'Appalling urban landscape" . I am humbled by the fact that my peers, friends and fellow architects have taken up the challenge and raised the banner and said "enough is enough, stop in God's name, but stop". It was heartening to note that in spite of the many mistakes of the last 3 decades of development, idealism and goodness still exist in many of my peers.

We just cannot go on our merry way, without endangering life, health, welfare of the citizens. Is it too late? I do not think so; in the life of a city there are many missteps. What really matters is to take corrective measures at the appropri ate time. And for Dhaka, that time is NOW. Good planning and development goes hand in hand. Architects and developers have a great responsibility on what they put in the ground that effect and change: natural light, urban pattern, traffic and sound, heat index, sewerage and water flow ,greenery in the urbanscape, to name a few. They have to be held accountable for or lack thereof, of good design and planning. If individuals do not perform they have to pay the penalty. That is how modern society

Just as the professionals, so do the legislators of the Jatiya Sangsad have an immense responsibility. The legislators who have been elected by the people and have to be held accountable for the legislation that they enact, which effect the citizens at large. They need to rise over their petty agenda, personal and party interest and do what is good for the citizens by passing and enforcing legislation.

Tanweer Karim, AIA Architect/Urban Designer Dallas, Texas, USA

World Cup and Bangladesh

In any other country, all the members of the Cricket Board would have resigned had their team performed in such a poor manner. But this is Bangladesh-- the country of the shameless. Sonia Rahman

Dhanmondi, Dhaka

I hope our politicians are satisfied. They have been able to politicise and ruin yet another sector--

Mosatfiz Hussain Jigatola, Dhaka

have mixed emotions about Bangladesh's performance in the World Cup match against New Zealand. It was good to see them not fishing outside off stump but they now have a new disease of pulling and hooking short-pitched balls. They should correct their approach but on average, it was a better performance compared to that horrendous exhibition against Canada. My compliments to young Ashraful for his beautiful knock and thanks to Chris Cairns for giving him that opportunity.

Fuad Bin Rahman

too far. We are straining



Dhaka

Nobody but nobody should be blamed for the Team's terrible performance but ourselves. We went overboard on every little success of the Team and look what we have done

Tarun Dhaka

It's amazing to know that the Kenyan national team has no sponsors. Whereas our team is filled with sponsors, cars, cash prizes etc. With every small achievement our government (past and present) and the people make them feel that they've accomplished the world's

1. Government: This is Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) not BNP Cricket Board. People in the Board should be people who are capable of delivering. Saber Hossain Chowdhury was in cricket for a long time before Awami League came to power. He should thus be reinstated in the Board. Whether we like it or not he did bring in foreign countries to play on our soil, and he was a major reason as to why Bangladesh became a Test playing nation. This credit should

greatest feat. This loss of Bangla-

desh is not just a good lesson for the

Team, but also for the following

cal party we support. 2. People: There is a saying, "pride comes before fall". This is especially true for our case as we didn't have anything to be proud of but were still very proud of ourselves. Be insulted of yourself as we are the reason as to why we now feel so dejected. Had we never took our "small" achievements so highly we wouldn't have so much expectations (expectations like beating

be realised no matter which politi-

Canada and Kenya). 3. BCB: I might give a large amount of donation and somehow by pulling various strings get into a big university like Harvard or Stanford (assuming), though I don't meet the standards of getting in. What happens next? I can't follow up as my classmates are way smarter than me. I can't pass in the exam, I don't follow the lectures. The same is with the Manager and President of BCB. You might be the president and manager, but you can't meet the requirements and you can't follow up with what is needed to be done. This will not only bad for the players, but also bad for the coun-

try and bad to your own status. 4. Cricketers: The players, I think, are the last to be blamed. If you don't teach your students properly, if you don't teach them all the tricks, all the ways to do things, how can you expect he'll ace? Our cricketers are just like students. It is the duty of the Board to ensure and build them as good crickets. They need to practise, and practise the right things. They won't be able to achieve the goal just by entering the World Cup, or just by getting Test status.

Shaddy ${\it University of Toronto, Canada}$

I'm not surprised over Bangla-desh's dismal performance in the World Cup. In an earlier mail, I mentioned that "experience matters". Akram Khan proved that, so did Odumbe and Steve Tikolo.

The players are not the only ones who should be blamed, although they are the ones who execute everything in the middle. But the most responsible is the Board and its selection procedure. Members of the current selection committee don't have any knowledge about cricket. BCB should pick members who are closely connected with cricket. The Captain has to take a certain amount of responsibility as

I demand immediate resignation of the worthless Board member, selectors and the captain. Let's try to forget this World Cup and try to focus on upcoming tours. Preparing better pitches and making a team comprised of both young and experienced players can make the situation better. Zahir

KC, USA

"Bush and Iraq"

I find Mr Azad's view (February 28) to be regrettable. Bush and Blair are trying to undermine the UN by crude threats. According to them the UN becomes "irrelevant" unless they get their way in their war game. It is a sad reminiscence of what Hitler and Mussolini did to scuttle the League of Nations before the World War II.

In spite of various shortcomings, the UN is our only hope. If Bush and Blair succeed in their unjust war plan then the law of the jungle will be let loose. Bangladesh, like many small countries, will have to face a lot to fear. Any big and powerful country could mount attack on its weaker neighbours on fabricated and imaginary pretext. We deeply appreciate the moral stand taken by France and Germany against this outrage. Hope their courage will not falter. Sakhawat Hossain

Gulshan, Dhaka

Palestine Chapter 7: Temple of Solomon The inevitable consequence of this

mpending war against Iraq, will lead to the altering of the regional balance of power vastly in fayour of Israel. It continues to disregard the existing resolutions as the US is only interested in enforcing UN resolutions in a selective manner, rather then chronologically. Such behaviour exhibit the deep contempt the US posses towards the Arab and the Islamic world. Hence it would not be unreasonable to rgue, that such selective application of UN resolution targeting a specific culture is outright racist! Not satisfied, the war hawks are now arguing for the first time, that the UN resolutions passed on Israel are not mandatory, since they were not issued under Chapter 7. Examining Chapter 7 as a layperson, it gives no clear indication as being the sole route for issuing mandatory resolution. Does this mean that the UN was simply passing most of these resolutions, so that its members can gain some practice? If a resolution is not binding, then why call it a resolution? It seems that truth is the first casualty

Just like US and Iraq, Israel also ustifies being "threatened" by the Palestinian women and children. Who are continuing to "terrorise the well equipped Israeli armed forces with sticks and stones. Following the destruction and colonisation of Iraq, Israel will posses a clear material advantage, coupled with the license given by the US to fight "terror". Which will ultimately result in the colonisation of the entire West Bank and expulsion of all the Palestinians. Many senior US senators already expressed this after 9/11, and as usual the Arab regimes took no

As Bush stated earlier in his own words that the crusade will take a ittle while. We will no doubt be told it is not a war against Islam, and that the US has genuine honourable intentions. Yamin Zakaria

UK, Hounslow, Middlesex

Tony Blair's oily mendacity

One of the themes Tony Blair keeps hammering on about is that inspections have been going on in Iraq for 12 years, which is proof of the patience and good faith of the US and UK, and at the same time a compelling reason for not waiting any longer before taking military action. Even a cursory look into the matter however reveals quite another picture.

The fact is that after inspections started in 1991 the bulk of the work was actually successfully accomplished within 2 years and Iraq had been effectively disarmed by then. However one of the conditions of the inspection process was that the sanctions on Iraq would also have to be withdrawn after the disarmament of Iraq had been carried out, which the US was reluctant to permit. Accordingly the inspections were artificially dragged on for years and years for no good reason just so the sanctions on Iraq could continue to be maintained, with the horrible cost in human and specially child casualties that they brought about. Many of the inspectors are said to have also actively supported this delay because all the while they were being paid handsome salaries, from out of Iraq's oil revenues!

Finally in 1998 when the pretence could no longer be maintained, because hundreds of inspectors on the ground literally had no more disarmament work to do, the US under Clinton withdrew the inspectors and carried out a final bombing campaign to destroy

At this point the Iragis and their French and Russian backers, could reasonably have hoped that sanctions would now be withdrawn and Iraq be allowed to resume life as a normal country. To their dismay however the US refused all UN efforts to lift sanctions which remained in place for another 4 years during which the humanitarian disaster in Iraq continued to take its toll in terms of dead and deformed children above all.

In the face of rising world outrage at this continuing humanitarian disaster the US tried in 2002 to modify the sanctions regime in such a way as to keep them in place indefinitely while allowing some limited humanitarian relief. These efforts however did not succeed. It was in this context that the US then developed the plan of actual invasion and occupation of Iraq as the only means left to ensure that the country could be prevented from resuming its re-building and development program, based on its petroleum and human resources.

Accordingly the entire propaganda campaign was launched about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction as a cover for the military take-over of Iraq which has now brought the world to the brink of another catastrophe.

Rafiqullah Bhuyian

The American psyche

Are Americans imperialists as often branded by the Soviet party bosses during the days of Cold War? Are they crass materialists as they are usually labelled by religious groups

My little contact with some Americans led me to believe that they were (or are?) generous and warm-hearted. Their sense of humour did really impress me.

History has it that they stood by suffering millions around the globe on many occasions. To put it in Ronald Reagan's words: 'wherever in the world there was a cry for help, Americans went there'. Operation Sea Angel carried out by the US Armed Forces in the wake of a disastrous cyclone in Bangladesh in 1991 is a case in point. Many a patron saint of democracy and universal brotherhood was born in USA. Jimmy Carter, Martin Luther King Jr., Thomas Jefferson are only a few faces in the myriad.

Nevertheless, as the winds of war are blowing over Iraq and the rest of the world, suddenly I find myself utterly confused about the contours of the American mind.

Does lady liberty standing tall at New York harbour reminds us of human values or does she frown on? To cow down the weak and tired?

Will any the readers help me to develop a dispassionate outlook on the American psyche? Mohammad Khaled Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Delay in textbook distribution

I am a student of Open University HSC program (1st year). Unfortunately three months have elapsed still we haven't received our textbook. Most of the students of Open University comes from the working class and have a side profession besides their studies. Only a few months left for the final exam and without the textbook the students are cannot but waste their time in frustration.

I earnestly request the authorities concerned to look into the matter and take prompt steps to end this predicament and thus ensure smooth academic lives of thousands of students. Anando Dhaka

US Diplomat's Letter of Resignation

Dear Mr Secretary: I am writing you to submit my resignation from the Foreign Service of the United States and from my position as Political Counselor in US Embassy Athens, effective March 7. I do so with a heavy heart. The baggage of my upbringing included a felt obligation to give something back to my country. Service as a US diplomat was a dream job. I was paid to understand foreign languages and cultures, to seek out diplomats, politicians, scholars and journalists, and to persuade them that US interests and theirs fundamentally coincided. My faith in my country and its values was the most powerful weapon in diplomatic arse-

It is inevitable that during twenty years with the State Department I would become more sophisticated and cynical about the narrow and selfish bureaucratic motives that sometimes shaped our policies. Human nature is what it is, and I was rewarded and promoted for understanding human nature. But until this Administration it had been possible to believe that by upholding the policies of my president I was also upholding the interests of the American people and the world. I believe it no

The policies we are now asked to advance are incompatible not only with American values but also with American interests. Our fervent pursuit of war with Iraq is driving us to squander the international legitimacy that has been America's most potent weapon of both offense and defense since the days of Woodrow Wilson. We have begun to dismantle the largest and most effective web of international relationships the world has ever known. Our current course will bring instability and danger, not security.

The sacrifice of global

interests to domestic politics and to bureaucratic selfinterest is nothing new, and it is certainly not a uniquely American problem. Still, we have not seen such systematic distortion of intelligence, such systematic manipulation of American opinion, since the war in Vietnam. The September 11 tragedy left us stronger than before, rallying around us a vast international coalition to cooperate for the first time in a systematic way against the threat of terrorism. But rather than take credit for those successes and build on them, this Administration has chosen to make terrorism a domestic political tool, enlisting a scattered and largely defeated Al Qaeda as its bureaucratic ally. We spread disproportionate terror and confusion in the public mind, arbitrarily linking the unrelated problems of terrorism and Iraq. The result, and perhaps the motive, is to justify a vast misallocation of shrinking public wealth to the military and to weaken the safeguards that protect American citizens from the heavy hand of government. September 11 did not do as much damage to the fabric of American society as we seem determined to so to ourselves. Is the Russia of the late Romanovs really our model, a selfish, superstitious empire thrashing toward self-destruction in the name of a doomed status

We should ask ourselves why we have failed to persuade more of the world that a war with Iraq is necessary. We have over the past two years done too much to assert to our world partners that narrow and mercenary US interests override the cherished values of our partners. Even where our aims were not in question, our consistency is at issue. The model of Afghanistan is little comfort to allies wondering on what basis we plan to

rebuild the Middle East, and in whose image and interests. Have we indeed become blind, as Russia is blind in Chechnya, as Israel is blind in the Occupied Territories, to our own advice, that overwhelming military power is not the answer to terrorism? After the shambles of postwar Iraq joins the shambles in Grozny and Ramallah, it will be a brave foreigner who forms ranks with Micronesia to follow where we lead.

We have a coalition still, a good one. The loyalty of

I urge you to listen to America's friends around the friends are afraid of us rather than for us, it is time to worry.

world. Even here in Greece, purported hotbed of European anti-Americanism, we have more and closer friends than the American newspaper reader can possibly imagine. Even when they complain about American arrogance, Greeks know that the world is a difficult and dangerous place, and they want a strong international system, my ability to represent the with the US and EU in close current US Administration. I partnership. When our have confidence that our democratic process is ulti-

beyond its limits an international system we built with such toil and treasure, a web of laws, treaties, organisations, and shared values that sets limits on foes far more effectively than it ever constrained America's ability to defendits interests. I am resigning because I have tried and failed to reconcile my conscience with



many of our friends is impressive, a tribute to American moral capital built up over a century. But our closest allies are persuaded less that war is justified than that it would be perilous to allow the US to drift into complete solipsism. Loyalty should be reciprocal. Why does our President condone the swaggering and contemptuous approach to our friends and allies this Administration is fostering, including among its most senior officials. Has "oderint dum metuant" really become our motto?

And now they are afraid. Who will tell them convincingly that the United States is as it was, a beacon of liberty, security, and justice for the planet?

Mr Secretary, I have enormous respect for your character and ability. You have preserved more international credibility for us than our policy deserves, and salvaged something positive from the excesses of an ideological and self-serving Administration. But your loyalty to the President goes

mately self-correcting, and hope that in a small way I can contribute from outside to shaping policies that better serve the security and prosperity of the American people and the world we share. John Brady Kiesling

(This is the text of John Brady Kiesling's letter of resignation to Secretary of State Colin L Powell. Mr Kiesling is a career diplomat who has served in the United States embassies from Tel Aviv to Casablanca to Yerevan. This letter was published on February 27, 2003 by the New York Times)