

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 Ruling"

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 producers.

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 sorts of crimes.

If the cases are shelved at random, it will shatter the nation's last hopes and trust. It will result in total misrule and corruption.

Col. Sharif Habibur Rahman, psc (Retd.) Dhaka

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 procedure 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 University.

This year (session 2002-2003) some students made attempts to get themselves admitted into the University through forged 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 forged 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 Ga-unit and the examination was held fairly and peacefully.

Md Ashraf Ali Khan Director (Acting) Public Relations Office University of Dhaka

Sacrificial lambs

This is in response to the letter by Mr. Mahubb ("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 people 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. Mahubb, 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 taxpayers support our army to defend us as a nation not to indiscriminately kill people in custody in the name of law and order.

Scherezade 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 forged in admission, questions of BA examinations under National University leaked and finally the leakage of BCS questions. What a pity!

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 blame them.

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 different 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

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 post-war 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



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?

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

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.

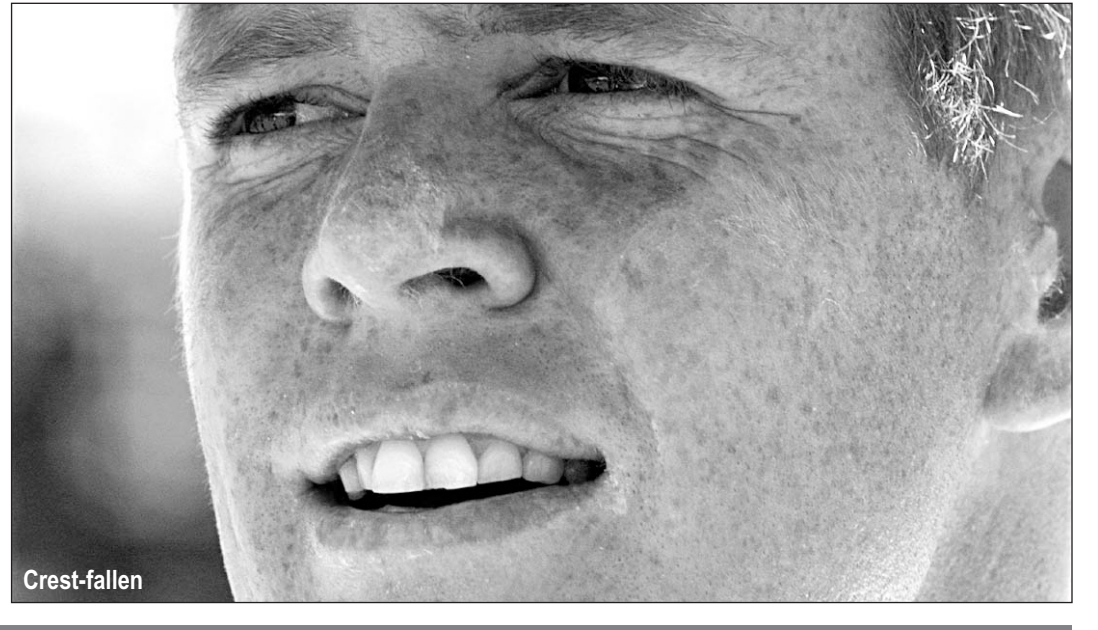
We just cannot go on our merry way, without endangering life, health, welfare of the citizens. Is it too late? I do not think so; in the life of a city there are many missteps. What really matters is to take corrective measures at the appropriate time. And for Dhaka, that time is NOW. Good planning and 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 urbscape, 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 functions.

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 legisla-

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 Choudhury Uttara, Dhaka



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!

Taruun 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 greatest feat. This loss of Bangladesh is not just a good lesson for the Team, but also for the following people:

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 be realised no matter which political 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 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 country 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 cricketers. 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 University of Toronto, Canada

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 impending war against Iraq, will lead to the altering of the regional balance of power vastly in favour of Israel. It continues to disregard the existing resolutions as the US is only interested in enforcing UN resolutions in a selective manner, rather than chronologically. Such behaviour exhibit the deep contempt the US poses towards the Arab and the Islamic world. Hence it would not be unreasonable to argue, 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 lawperson, 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 of war.

Just like US and Iraq, Israel also justifies 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 possess 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 notice.

As Bush stated earlier in his own words that the crusade will take a little 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

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.

Tony Blair's oily mendacity

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 arsenal.

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 longer.

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 self-interest 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 do 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 quo?

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

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

too far. We are straining 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 defend its interests.

I am resigning because I have tried and failed to reconcile my conscience with my ability to represent the current US Administration. I have confidence that our democratic process is ulti-

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)