EADING the two-part series on human rights by Dr Chandra Muzaffar of Malaysia, published recently in this paper, many of us were deeply impressed by the substantive issues raised in the articles and. what's more, by the factle crisp manner in which Muzaffar put across his views for the media.

In many ways, Chandra, as we called him during our association in Kuala Lumpur, belongs to a class by himself. Perhaps now in his early fifties, with a doctorate from a US university, whose forefathers came from Kerala, he has been a long-suffering victim of polio. He has difficulties in walking, climbing stairs and travelling abroad in foreign assignments. Yet, an internationally-recognised social activist who served a short prison term in late eightics under Malaysia's International Security Act (ISA). Chandra produces a highly stimulating journal, writes regularly for the media on issues ranging from Islamic furidamentalism to the Third World's relationship with the industrialised North and takes every opportunity of upholding liberal humanistic values in the country's multi-racial society.

Chandra Muzaffar may be unique. But there are others in the Association of South East Asian Nations' (ASEAN) region who see the value and importance of using the media in a style that is a hallmark of good journalism. For instance, we have Tommy Koh, a former Singapore ambassador to the UN and then to the US, now heading a research institute in the city republic; Mahabani Kishore, one of the highest-ranking officials in the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Dr Nordin Sopiee, the Director General of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) of Malaysia, among others, not to mention experts in this category we find in Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines. Even South Koreans, some Japanese and Indians are making their mark in international and regional journalism, often presenting their individual or national perceptions on contemporary issues.

THAT we see in the academic circles in Bangladesh provides a sharp — indeed, a sad - contrast to the situation that exists in the ASEAN region or in East Asia. We do have our own experts in many different fields, who get invited to seminars abroad, on wide ranging subjects and are listened to by foreign audiences as 'voices from Bangladesh. True, at most of these activities, their participation is very much in their personal capacities. Nevertheless, their nationality - or being voices from the Third World -- remain important.

It is, therefore, perfectly understandable that we, in the media, should be curious about what our experts or even our political personalities say at these regional or international meetings.

At the time of writing this column, the Awami League (AL) chairperson Sheikh Hasina is in France attending the national convention of the French Socialist Party at Lyon, while Dr Kamal Hossain of the Democratic Forum is visiting Cyprus chairing a meeting of the Commonwealth Human Rights Advisory Commission.

We are sure, both will be making speeches

MYWORLD

S. M. Ali

at these two important gatherings, Hasina on the future of socialism in the changing world and Hossain on human rights in the Commonwealth. I, for one, would be surprised if we get to know what they say. There may be short press releases, sent out to all the news papers, and later they may do the "favour" of sending us full texts of their speeches in the hope of the press serialising them as articles! What they won't do is to put in some extra work to produce the kind of easy to-follow crisp articles on human rights we recently got

> If our experts and policy-makers fail to make a good use of the local media, they also remain far removed from the regional press whose perception of Bangladesh is either hazy or negative. Here, again, government leaders and commentators of other countries . have stolen a march over us.

from Chandra Muzaffar and Mahabani Kishore, or on the prerequisites of good government, as outlined by Tommy Koh in the International Herald Tribune, a superb piece that prompted me to take up the subject in one of my regular columns.

As a case in point, The Daily Star would have been delighted to publish a 1,200-word article by Sheikh Hasina on human rights on its editorial page, based on but not verbatim reproduction of her talk before the gathering of NGOs in Vienna. If the presence of the Al. leader in Vienna was important enough for her to skip most of the budget session, a signed article by her would have certainly added much to this paper. Since it is a bit late to have a piece by the AL leader on Vienna, we will be happy to welcome an article on socialism, a subject Hasina is certain to discuss at Lyon in France. A similar offer is made to Kamal Hossain to do a piece for us on human rights on his return from Cyprus.

N the face of it, is may sound a little simplistic to suggest that the attitude of a cross-section of our educated elite the academic experts, politicians, government leaders and even business tycoons - towards the media is based on a combination of lack of

understanding, distrust, apathy and a love hate

syndrome, almost in this order. There is little doubt that several newspapers do cause all kinds of problems to the edu cated elite - this is not uncommon in most countries - but a hasty generalisation of the media in this country, in negative terms, among the educated elite is detrimental to na tional interests.

Notwithstanding many faults we identify in the media, the educated elite should appreciate that it needs newspapers, not just for publication of press statements or photographs but for provoking in-depth stimulating discussions on national and international issues. True, a number of our regular columnists have added much strength to this paper. Unfortunately, there still exists a barrier between the media, including the Star, and makers of policies and opinions in this country, especially from the younger generation.

Unable to make full use of the local media. these policy makers and non official experts also remain far removed from the regional and international press whose perception of Bangladesh remains either hazy or negative, sometimes both. Here, again, government leaders and commentators from other Asian countries have stolen a march over us.

It is not that we have no issues to write about for the regional and international press. There are some obvious ones, like the impact of protectionism on a Least Developing Country (LDC) like Bangladesh; Dhaka's determined drive towards privatisation, backed by liberal trade and investment policies; the spirited stand of Bangladesh on the Bosnia conflict; and the Rohingya refugee problem. If such articles are offered to leading regional or international newspapers, many of which now have offices in Hongkong and Singapore, I would like to see them under such prestigious bylines as of Finance Minister Saifur Rahman and Foreign Minister Mostafizur Rahman. After all, if Lee Kuan Yew, Goh Chok Tong, Mahathir Mohammad and Abdullah Badawi, all national leaders in their countries, can take time off from the busy schedules to present their national viewpoints, why should not our policy makers skip a few of their political rallies, shut themselves in their studies and see for themselves if they have anything much to say, in writing, for an international audience?

TRITING for the media, national, regional and international, is undoubtedly complex and demanding. Otherwise, there would not have been so many manuals on journalism filling the shelves of bookstores in London, New York and now in several Asian

This probably prompted a friend of mine in the media to make a somewhat audacious sug-

gestion that an institution like the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) should bring to gether some of our socio-economic commentators in a kind of orientation course on writing for newspapers. For instance, it should be possible for an academic writer to turn a 2,500 word piece on multilateralism into a tighter 1.500 word article, without losing anything of substance, except some extra fat. It is also possible to work through a hefty research study, virtually on any subject, to produce a highly readable newspaper feature. Few daily publications like to use long articles which take the space that belongs to news and distorts the format of the page. Fewer still go for publishing a long scholarly piece, complete with footnotes, in instalments, since more of ten than not, a reader is unable to follow the continuity of ideas from one day to another Herein lies some of the differences between writing for a journal and contributing to a daily newspaper

All very daring ideas. He has even some names of experts whom he would like to invite to the so-called orientation course. I would rather not bring up these names - yet.

started this column in apprectation of Dr Chandra Muzaffar, but overlooked one important reference. He is based in Penang, a port city of Malaysia, a most popular holiday resort where medium-sized hills provide a fascinating backdrop to long sandy beaches dotted with luxury hotels. Penang is also the home of superb Malaysian cuisine, including the unforgettable Laksa, the soup which rivals Thatland's Tom Yam Koom.

However, it is the intellectual atmosphere of Penang that deserves the highest commendation. The country's University Science of Malaysia is based here, occupying a vast complex that once served as a British cantonment maintaining a high standard of education on a variety of subjects, including mass communication and computer science. During our stay in Malaysia in the last decade, it was always a pleasure for me to spend a couple of hours at the university.

In the last decade, Penang served as the global headquarters of international association of consumer organisations (the exact title escapes my memory), with Malaysian Anwar Faza serving as its head and, indeed, doing an excel lent job in spreading the awareness of consumerism throughout the region and outside. The headquarters of the organisation has now probably moved to the Hague - I do not have the latest information on the subject - but the consumer organisation in Penang still maintains a well-equipped laboratory and carries out a public awareness programme.

Then, there is the Third World Features Service, a weekly development-oriented packet of well-written articles, that goes out to a large number of newspapers in Asia and outside. It is the privilege of The Daily Star to make an extensive use of the service from Penang.

If any of our divisional headquarters, say, Chittagong, Khulna or Rajshahi, could achieve half as much as Penang, it would probably earn for it the twin city status with the Malaysian port of long sandy beaches and dark lush green

another history. In addition to

this, we are dependent on coop-

eration with as many states as

possible in order to develop the

German economy - above all, in

the new federal states. We need

people abroad to be willing to

invest here. The foreign workers

in Germany pay a considerable

proportion of our taxes and our

social security contributions: a

total of 57 billion marks a year.

Foreigners are only receive 16

billion marks in welfare

payments. Foreigners are

indispensable to the German

economy. Approximately half of

the 1.95 million foreigners in

employment work in industry.

One in five work in service

industries - particularly in the

field of gastronomy and related

areas. Ten per cent of the

Federal Republic's gross

domestic product is created by

foreign workers. The Turkish

people living in Germany alone

spend roughly fifty billion marks

a year here. For moral and also

economic reasons it is now time

to make absolutely clear to ev-

eryone what Germans really

think. This includes solidarity

with our foreign neighbours and

sensitivity in dealing with his-

President of the Confederation of

which the company manage-

ment and the works council

jointly called upon all members

of the work force to show their

solidarity with their foreign

colleagues. Inside the company

there is a very strict basic rule

: Anyone caught making

racist remarks or graffiti is

fired. "A lot of German col-

leagues here now wear the

badge 'My friend a foreigner',"

says Mehmet Kucuk. The Turk

is one of five foreign members of

the company's works council.

The cooperation between

German and foreign employees

here functions as well or as

badly as between Germans and

Germans or between loreigners

torical facts.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Hans Peter Stihl

Trade and Industry

The Enduring Saga of Kamlabai by Vidyarthy Chatterjee

HE is blind in one eye. lame in one leg, and was 88 years of age when the film was made. Today, at 93, she lives, as she has lived for many years now, alone in a Pune flat marked by long spaces and longer silences. She has her own, but she lives alone - with lingering memories and moments of internalised glory. She is Kamladevi Raghunath

Gokhale, or simply Kamlabai. The great actress of the Marathi stage and screen, whose histrionic talent was admitted even by Dadasaheb Phalke, has been rescued from oblivion by the young filmmaker Reena Mohan, thanks to a sad and delightful documentary that this writer had the opportunity to see twice in January this year, first at the 23rd international film festival of India (IFFI) in New Delhi and soon after at the Third Dhaka International Short Film Fes-

Significantly, audiences in both capitals rose as one in genuine and heartfelt appreciation of the young documentarlan's exploratory and evocative interpretation of a life as earthy as the earth and as sublime as a dove in flight.

Let us begin at the beginning. By her own admission, Kamlabai had a rogue of a father and an angel for a mother. Unable to put up with her abusive and philandering husband, Kamlabai's mother went her own way, joining an itinerant theatre group that put up shows in towns located in the regions now known as Maharashtra and Karnataka. Kamlabai grew up in the heady atmosphere of mythologicals, melodramas, gaudy costumes, stage props, grease paint, and the androgynous spectacle of fair, well-rounded men playing female parts to advantage. Some women, in their turn, played men's roles to perfection. Kamlabat was one such artiste.

Speaking to the camera, Kamlabai relates a delightful, naughty story underlining her skill at transformation. A married, young woman was once so taken up by Kamlabai in the guise of a man that she left her home and family and went out of town in pursuit of the travelling performer. When she professed her love, Kamlabai took her to the greenroom, took off her stage attire and made the young woman realise that all along she had, in fact, been pursuing one of her own kind!

Losing her husband (who was also in the theatre) at a young age, Kamlabai had to draw on all her reserves of courage, perseverance and capacity for hard work to bring up her sons without support from any quarter. It may seem a bit jarring to today's feminists but the actress is happy that she had only sons and no daughter. Having seen her mother suffer so badly for no fault of her own and having suffered herself in the absence of a man beside her, she did not want one of her own blood and bones to have a similar experience in a society that is still insufferably patriarchal and rigid when it comes to treating the two sexes on an equal footing. Yet, the same Kamlabai, irrepressible and true, who does not seem to have much faith in the institution of marriage, hollers out to Reena Mohan, teasingly, asking her to get married immediately for her own good!

Combining snatches of interview with film clips of a for-

gotten era, period music and sepia linted photographs articulating the life and times of the actress. Reena Mohan gives us the essence of a relic of the past who is, paradoxically, also a remarkably modern and independent-minded woman. The anger and pathos and humour with which she talks of her parents, her handsome husband who died young, her family and society, and, finally, her art and her persistent efforts to excel herself, would shame many a modernist character - or postmodernist, if you like!

The film's freshness of style and originality of treatment is matched by the character and exuberance of the subject who alternates between the arresting vigour of the rebel and the painful submission of the re-

In this context, for someone who has observed all the rituals and kept all the fasts in a life characterised by extreme religiosity, it must take great courage to say that, nearing her end, she has lost faith in the external manifestations of religion. Why else, she argues, should she have to suffer the page of decay and the pangs of

But, all said and done, the ! true artist is never defeated; not even in defeat. He or she may be occasionally down, but the struggle to achieve, notwithstanding the odds, is never abandoned. In the end, Kamlabai is only skeptical; she is far from having lost faith. She keeps reminding one, without spelling it out, that the true artist is never too sure of anything; that doubts and dilemmas are, so to say, a part of her invisible stock-in-trade; that clarity of vision about life and its creatures as indeed the creative energy they together produce, is finally the only thing that does and should mat-

Reena Mohan, director and producer of Kamlabat, has been working in Delhi and Bombay as a freelance film editor since 1982. It took her four years to complete the film, which marks her debut as a director. A graduate of the Pune Film Institute, Reena specialised in editing. She freely admits that her first assignment following graduation - editing Mani Kaul's long, avant garde documentary feature, Mati Manas (which formed a part of the Mani Kaul retrospective at the Dhaka festival this year) - was a breakthrough in the sense that it gave her confidence and an awareness of the possibilities inherent in her area of specialisation. She has very complimentary things to say about Kaul; about how she, then just a newcomer, was given a lot of freedom to work and express herself in the way she wanted

In conclusion, Kamlabai points to an increasing awareness on the part of a section of young documentary and short film makers to experiment with the language of cinema; to fuse form with content in such a manner as to accord to the imagination and to insight the importance that has so long becat denied them in different of the sub-continent. And, judging from the response of viewers, there is a loyal and anxious audience waiting to recognise such innovative work. There are enough takers in both India and Bangladesh for works of simple greatness.

Neighbours with Foreign Passports



Soccer Bundesliga: Jubilation on the terraces



"Beisen Project": The theory and practice of living together

Continued from page 9 involved in the "Beisen Project". Almost a quarter of the population of Beisen are of non-German origin. Foreigners have been living here for three generations. They were recruited in Turkey in the sixties and seventies when the mines were booming and there was a shortage of skilled labour. The Germans and foreigners had to learn to live together, so the "Beisen Project" was established with the aim of promoting *organisational skills and conflict reduction in the district". This was to apply to both the way different groups of inhabitants approached each other and also to their dealings with the authorities. The project is not only supported by the City of Essen and the

Arbeiterwohlfahrt charity, but also by a theoretical framework which was drawn up ten years ago by the University of Essen's "Institute for Social Work in Urban Districts". Since the closure of the pit in 1985 the social situation in Beisen has seriously deteriorated : poverty has increased, youth unemployment has risen and the housing market has changed. Macide Serpemen, a Turkish woman who works in the "wooden building", is convinced that mutual understanding can only develop if Germans and foreigners come together within the project. In their joint campaign on kindergarten places, for example, Germans and Turks were able to come closer together, and their own conflicts became easier to solve once

they were able to get to know one another. Now in Beisen there is a German-Turkish toordinating group which publiciscs the latest problems in the district and presents proposals on how to solve them, a Turkish women's group, and a newspaper group that publishes a local newspaper in the Turkish language. Spectacular achievements have not been responsible for the positive developments here in Essen, but the countless small steps which have made it possible for Germans and foreigners to live together normally.

IIE Office for Multicul-

tural Affairs in Frankfurt am Main is the first of its kind. It was established in the city - 26 per cent of its population are foreigners - four years ago and is now serving as a model for Humburg, Bremen and Munich. Describing the duties of the office, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, the unpaid head of the authority, says: "We are searching for new ways forward in those areas where friction arises in the interaction between different cultures and groups." The Frankfurt model is intended to reduce but not deny the conflicts that result from the presence of foreigners. "We talk a lot, mainly with other areas of the city administration. We are trying to explain the problems and develop solutions with the parties involved." The office's successes involve small steps forward which make everyday life a little easier. The 18 staff, people of various nationalities, know the languages of the migrants. Thus, for example, they helped the pension office by providing translations of its information brochures. As a result, the queues were considerably reduced. In In Germany pre domi-Frankfurt language problems

now no longer lead to administrative delays. When local inhabitants complain about the noise made by their foreign neighbours, staff from the authority act as arbitrators. The authority provides help for sports clubs where migrants' children play with German children. But we are not a lobby for foreigners' interests," says Daniel Chon-Bendit, which does not mean that the office will not take up individual cases when people have difficulties obtaining a residence permit or problems with the welfare office. This even makes up a large proportion of the office's work. Alongside this, Daniel Cohn-Bendit is a strong advocate of greater rights for foreigners in Germany. *Multicultural politics means the introduction of laws, regulations and facilities to eliminate the discrimination of minorities and to achieve equal rights for all without regard for social background,

ethnic origin, religion or sex." The successes of this Frankfurt institution have been small, but they are nevertheless important for the people of different cultural backgrounds and mentalities who have to live together. This view is also taken elsewhere. Since January 1 an intercultural Office for Foreigners' Equality has been working in the nearby city of Mainz. Lyon has now also established an institution for minorities. Before doing so, councillors from the second largest French city paid a visit to their colleagues in Frankfurt, something which has also been done by delegations from Vienna, Zurich and

T the Adam Opel company the words 'Made nantly mean skilled Turkish



Opel: Assembly line workers speak over 40 languages here



Why we need foreign workers

Germany is a cosmopolitan country. Unfortunately a few violent extremists have created a totally different image as a result of their cowardly attacks against foreigner citizens in Germany. Candlelight demonstrations with millions of participants, diverse acts of solidarity and decisive action on the part of the constitutional state have fortunately been able to counter this impression. Approximately every second job in Germany is dependent on people in other countries buying our goods, people with other beliefs and

craftsmanship. This was already accepted by the management of the Russelsheim-based car manufacturing firm in 1972. Without the guest workers from Turkey Opel would not have been able to overcome the production bottlenecks which were then seriously affecting output. Today 53,000 people from 48 nations work for the German subsidiary of General Motors. One in six of work force is a foreigner, including the chairman of the board, David Herma. The 3,200 workers from Turkey are by far the largest group. "We are one team" is Opel's answer to hostility to foreigners. It was also written in bold letters on the poster with



Frankfurt's Office for Multicultural Affairs Equal rights for all

Humanity by Md Monirul Hoque

My eyes run through horizon to horizon,

My knowledge take a closer look country to country, My heart is burnt for days after days. When I close my eyes I can see the Skelfton of Somalia, Oh! What a pain of starvation Yes! Still now Hiroshima radiating my mind, Hundred and hundred coffins in Bosnia. See! How much tears stored in my heart Shamet Millions of children decay in morn only for basic needs of life - food, medicine and shelter. Do you know —

Thousands of people settlement destroyed by natural calamities in Bangladesh. Oh! How long this distressed humanity last for! Let us everyone pray to the Lord

"May peace and humanity prevail on earth forever"!

here have been accustomed to marks for information leading an international atmosphere to the arrest of the offenders for more than thirty years. Opel and donated 50,000 marks to attempts to stimulate an interest in other cultures with small offerings such as international speciality days in the canteen or support for foreign language courses. The car manufacturer's spontaneous reaction to the racist arson attack in Molln in which three Turkish women were killed was of a completely

different order. The company

offered a reward of 100,000

the family of the victims. Company chairman David

Hermann said : "This is intended to be a small token of solidarity with all the foreigners living in Germany and with the Turkish workers without whose help the achievements of the German automobile industry in recent decades would not have been possible."