AL and Bangladesh

Is it that our opposition leaders don't have issues worthy of creating uproar in Bangladesh that they are at work in destroying the image of the nation? As their misdeeds are being disclosed by the former President justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and as a number of their stalwarts are being rounded up they are in a mood to destroy the image of our beloved country.

During his meeting with the British Prime Minister Tony Blair, AL acting President Abdus Samad Azad mentioned about some Taliban linking with the ruling coali-

But he forgot that with the help of the so-called fundamentalist components AL created a mess in the country during the BNP regime of 1991-96. These Jamat people were good when they worked with AL. But now they have become Taliban agents, which need to be annihilated, as they are working with BNP.

If the AL leadership does not understand the sentiment of people in general they have to face worse than being defeated in the election.

BUET

Weird politicians

What a weird bunch of politicians we have! There is probably no other country in the world where the politicians make such careless remarks against their opponents and complaint to the foreigners, as the Awami Leaders have done to the British PM. During the visit of the former US President Bill Clinton, they did the same thing.

For their own interest they can do anything. It is heard that Amir Hussain Amu even cried in front of Blair for his defeat to a widow, according to him who (Ellen Bhutto) is also a member of Taliban.

Klanto Jhalakati

The Lord "Shaheb"

It has been nearly 55 years since the English Shahebs have left. But. somehow, we are yet to shed our servile attitude towards the "Colonial Era Bosses'

Case in point, the acting Awami League President's recent meeting with Tony Blair. It is really disheartening to see the depths the AL has sunk to express its dislike for BNP. How the mighty have fallen!

Anwar Babar Dallas, Texas, USA

A tip for the Awami League

The learned Awami League leaders perhaps do not know that in Afghanistan the Jamaat-e-Islami is one of the major components of the Northern Alliance who fought hand in hand with the USA to root out Taliban forces from that country.

Borhanuddin Rabbani, who was the President of Afghanistan being supported by the Northern Alliance during the main phase of the American vvar on terrorism, is the supreme leader of the Jamaat-e-Islami of Afghanistan.

All the Jamaat-e-Islami parties in different countries of the world are well connected with one another and follow the same principles. This is the cause behind why Jamaat-e-Islami of Bangladesh has taken a low-toned stand against the latest American policy in Afghanistan.

The complaint to the British Prime Minister that the present Bangladesh government has two ministers (belonging to the Jamaate-Islami party of Bangladesh) who have Taliban links will not be plausible to them (the virtual masters). Awami League will have to device new allegations to be made to our 'foreign masters' to portray the present government and the country communal in the eyes of the

A HAND OF GENUINE FRIENDSHIP

IS NOT ENOUGH !

INDIA

job for India.

Ravi Karishna

Manama, Bahrain

Extend the hand of friendship

PAKISTAN

There is no doubt that President Musharraf wants to avoid a war

with India. So, let New Delhi not invite international condemnation

and mutual destruction by imposing a war on Pakistan. Interna-

tional pressure and our 'diplomatic agenda' are doing much of the

So, why hurry with war-like gestures? If there is still some differ-

ence in our approach to and assessment of terrorism as a condem-

nable phenomenon then its roots go back to January 1986, when

Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, openly argued that "there was a thin

line between terrorism and freedom movement". He referred to the

West's description of Nelson Mandela, who was then serving a long

pronouncements and adopt a more flexible and friendly attitude.

So, it is better that New Delhi soon changes its posture and

A war will bring us neither glory nor territory, but only truckloads

of dead-bodies and an opportunity for India's "Coffin Chor"(thief)

prison sentence in Rodin Island, as an arch-terrorist.

Defence Minister to plunder more money.

The adage is "Don't hurt your foe when he seeks peace".

world community.

If they can be successful in this drive then that will serve enormously to the national interest! BNP played the same role while it was in the Opposition. So cheer up Awami League! We must make the world believe that ours is a communal country, we must not let the world forget that ours is the most corrupt and abjectly poor country. So let's tighten our loin clothes and shout to our crescendo.

Faruque Hasan Dhanmondi, Dhaka

What's wrong with Hasina?

Reading the past couple of day's national dailies one could easily come to this conclusion that, our honourable (?) ex-Prime Minister has lost her sanity

There is no doubt that she is still sour from her humiliating defeat in the last parliamentary election but that does not give her the right to go around the world crucifying our country's image. In a time like this when every sane person in the world is trying to steer away from anything that is even remotely close to the word 'Taliban'. our ex-Prime Minister is out on a world-wide campaign to accuse our government of being pro-Taliban.

My question to the ex-Prime Minister is "Have you lost your mind? Expatriates has problems of their own, if you can't solve them just don't create new ones by labelling the country of being pro-

Nafees Alam Dallas, Texas, USA

Use more jute bags

The BTV news bulletin in evening of December 12 showed one of our urea factories, where the product was being packed in paper/synthetic bags.

A colleague sitting by my side offered an explanation that since urea is hygroscopic (like sugar and salt), the packing has to be airtight; hence jute bags cannot be used.

My query about the possibility of using synthetic-lined jute bags evoked a vague response-- either that would cost higher, or there might be lack of facilities to produce such weatherproof jute bags locally.

With ecological issues at this point, it is the time to focus on such topics like natural fibres. Could you provide some information from authentic sources about the issue raised above?

A Mawaz

Orderly disorder

Intelligent he is who acts spontaneously, observing and sensing the

Stride to live in this part of the world is also a kind of performing a religious activity. If it had not been so, Allah would

not urge the mankind to go for searching a livelihood right after the prayers end in the mosques. The Khatib Moulana Obaidul

Hague could have prayed for safety and wellbeing of the whole Muslim world instead of branding any culture or any country or any President as some terrorist in the Eid congregation on December 17.

"Bangladesh: Love it or leave it" the opinion is accurate and obviously it is a threat to Moulana Obaidul Hoque.

He should leave Bangladesh and go to the Gaza Strip or to Chechnya to serve his Jehadi Josh ("Fighting phobia". December 25). That piece of writing was so touchy that I longed to know who wrote it and found that the writer lives in Kansas. USA. Somebody, who is an immigrant (assumed) in the USA loves Bangladesh and the other (Khatib) being permanent Bangladeshi

I CAN ALSO OFFER

A TENTACLE OF GENUINE

FRIENDSHIP , A CLAW

OF GENUINE FRIENDSHIP

A HOOK OF GENUINE

FRIENDSHIP, A PAW

OF GENUINE FRIENDSHIP

ETC, ETC

Faezul Hug replies to accusations

Thank you very much for providing me with the opportunity for certain clarifications to issues raised by Mr. Shawkat Hosain and Mr. Alam, pertaining to my role during 1971

May I take this last opportunity Sir, to reply to the recent letter written by Mr. Shawkat Hosain, who, if he doesn't feel satisfied, may still continue to correspond with me at my local address or through the email supplied for his convenience.

Before I proceed to reply to his queries, I would like to say that I do not need any further apology from him. He has already appeared to be quite application when he mentioned that he was about to send in the letter of apology which I had asked for, and my purpose I think, has been served. I do not have or had any personal enmity with Mr. Hosain or Mr.Alam (who sound the same person to me) and as such let us not drag the matter in that direction any further.

I have tried my best to reply to all his ten questions and would expect a fair assessment of the situation.

(1) Yes I contested in the 1970 general elections and won, to be elected as the youngest member of the then National Assembly.

(2) No, I could not participate in our War of Independence as a freedom fighter. (3) I had all the sincere intentions of going over to Mujibnagar but certain misunderstanding cropped up initially (due to the publication of a so-called statement by me) and some of my friends, relations and well-wishers advised me to get in touch with the leaders in Mujibnagar first and then move. Further, family commitments (like looking after a sick mother) and without any other male member to take over the responsibilities at that moment, delayed my departure on at least two occasions. By the time we (myself and late Abdul Halim Choudhury Jewel, who was my childhood friend and a great freedom fighter-patriot of our country) worked out a plan, it was probably too late in October 1971, and Jewel was already dead. My contact through the French Consulate in Dhaka was just an additional effort to supplement my attempts to cross over safely. Mr. Hosain should appreciate that not all the Awami League MPs crossed over in 1971 and almost 110 MNAs and MPAs were present in and around Dhaka till the 16th day of December 1971. Even our revered poet Shamshur Rahman was in Dhaka during all those 9 months. Does it mean that he did not support our cause then?

(4) I did not require or ask for the protective custody. It was thrust on me by the government of Mr. Tajuddin Ahmed.

(5) I have never said or asserted that my losses were due to looting or otherwise. What I wanted to say was that due to my sudden detention without any cogent reason at that time, and with my bail petition being refused on 17 occasions without any charges whatsoever, I had to instruct my family reluctantly, to dispose off our Sadarghat School Supply building. It was for a throw away price of only Taka 3(three) lakh because an adverse 'Bayena-nama' had already been signed in May 1971 when we were refused operation of our bank accounts, as those were frozen by the Pakistani authorities. The drawing of a simile with the collaborating Biharis by Mr. Hosain in this regard is simply

(6) Why I was detained is quite clear to me now as a 'blue-print' con-

citizen hates Bengali culture and New York, USA sends Bush to bush.

How conflicting the encounter is!

Nur Hossain

"Muslim or not"

This is in response to Mr. Ahmad Jamali's letter (January 4). I find his letter quite intriguing. I humbly disagree with the premise of his reasoning that the harmful effects of

Bangladeshis not fit to be Muslims?

As a person of Middle Eastern descent, I am surprised at the lengthy debate on Islamic issues that your paper has been carrying on for so long. To be honest, the Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis have little or no knowledge of the roots of Arabic

What about the rickshaw-pullers?

I appreciate the government's concern about solving the different problems, which results in horrifying traffic jams. Though their decision to relocate bus and truck terminals was well planned, it would be quite harsh to the rickshawnullers that would almost be unemployed if rickshaws were banned in major parts of the

city. Also, corrupt traffic police officials will relish the fact that the traffic policemen will receive 40 per cent of the money collected from the fines of traffic offences.

Thus it is going to be a double blow to the city-dwellers who are already victimised by these dishonest officials. Therefore, the government should keep in mind the consequences before taking these rather dubious steps.

A.H, on e-mail



Going, going, gone?

and the intrinsic glory of the culture

from which Islam has sprung. It

seems more like the half-educated

sermons that one hears in Africa, so

far away from Mecca. Your letter

writers seem to be portraying Islam

as some ossified document full of

utterances, which is more in com-

mon with Stalin than the Prophet of

You should take time to study the

Quran in its entirety and also the

background and cultures from

which the faith emerged and flour-

ished. Your brothers in the US are

part of strange herd, unsure of

being anything including a follower

of Islam. They seem to be keener to

wear the hijab than take Islam to its

true glory. Maybe this is because in

India, Hindus also practice repres-

sion on women and they are influ-

enced by that culture.

Arabia

my vices are confined to me, and have in no way harmed any one

In the US alone drunk drivers kill hundreds and maim thousands of people every year. Ironically, many of these drivers when sober are actually responsible and law abiding citizens. Also many people today take drugs or some form of narcotics for recreation purposes or just for the thrill of getting high from time to time.

Future offspring of such parents would be at high risk of developing permanent and irreversible birth defects. Every year thousands of compulsive gamblers around the world manage to ruin their lives as well as those of their near and dear ones. I could go on and on but I think I made my point.

Mr. Jamali really need not worry about the "quardians of his faith pronouncing judgement against him. It is clear from the Quran that even the prophets were not guardians of the faith.

As Allah has given everybody a free will, therefore the mission of the prophets was limited to delivering Allah's message and warning people. Ultimate guidance comes from Allah and He guides whom He wills but you will not be wronged if you truly seek his guidance.

Lastly, Mr. Jamali asks whether he should be called a Muslim or an

tion but I think it is the prerogative of the Almighty to make final judge-

But know this, sir, that unfortunately neither the Quran nor the authentic Hadith have any provision for half-hearted, non-practising, part time or even seasonal Muslims

Samad Sarwar

uttered? The Prime Minister (who was the chief executive and the supreme leader also) was the only person who mattered in allimportant things at that point of time. Since I was not allowed the normal course of law, it was his office with late Mr. Rafiqullah Choudhury as the Secretary to the Prime Minister, who processed my (7) I did not go to Lyallpur of my own. Along with others (like late journalist Mr. Najmul (or Nizamul) Huq of PPI, Dhaka, who was picked up by the Al-Badr killers later, after he returned; Late Syed Mozzamel Huq of BSS and Mr.Hafizul Islam, who was with some bank at that time and later became the Managing Director of A.B.Bank Limited

spiracy operated throughout that period and I don't want to waste any

further time on that. I have never said that I needed the recommenda-

tions of two British MPs or the Amnesty International, in order to get

released. Where did you get that Mr. Hosain? Why are you unneces-

sarily trying to put certain words in my mouth, which I have not



were all flown along with a dozen other prominent persons whom I did not know personally. None of us knew our destination, nor did we know as to why we were being taken like that. It was all revealed later. (8) I was set free on the 19th of September 1971 and reached Dhaka a day later via Karachi. I was free to a limited extent, because my movement was restricted to Dhaka city only.

(9) Our Tikatully house was surrounded on the afternoon of 31st March 1971 and the whole neighbourhood was taken aback. People thought that I would be taken away or killed. The local army unit which had surrounded our house on some mischievous report, searched each and every nook and corner of the house to find out the 'miscreants' as they said, and left in disgust after the routine curfew was re-imposed that afternoon. But they told me in clear terms to stay inside and be prepared for interrogation the next day at 8 o'clock at the old Gonobhabon (opposite the Ramna Park). The next day, that is on the 1st of April, I was taken and kept till 2 p.m and interrogated by five army officers. Later they said they were releasing me with strict restrictions

chaired by a BNP lawmaker where

the speakers stated their views on

our Liberation War. Most of the

speakers in the meeting reportedly

said that the people of our country

fought the war and any political

party or an individual cannot claim

the victory alone. Further they

expressed that the "claimants are

distorting the history of Liberation

alone cannot fight a liberation war.

Mahatma Gandhi did not go to the

front. Bin Laden did not hijack the

planes and bombed the Twin Tow-

ers. It was his people who did it.

Now who is the hero of that inci-

dent? Of course Osama Bin Laden

and not his followers. Chairman

Arafat never goes into the Israeli

territory to bomb the Israeli army, it

is his people who go and risk lives

for Palestine. There are many

heroes in the world history who did

not go to the front, it was their peo-

ple who fought the wars, gave lives

and endured sufferings for freedom.

And it's the same in the case of

Bangladesh, the people of this soil--

Yes, it is true that an individual

It seems your writers may fail to

pray once in a while but they cer-

tainly like to demand the use of

hijab, the meaning of which they

don't know. The man from the land

of sari is indeed a strange being.

A simple request to

I have a small request to those who

always speaks in favour of the US.

My request is they should stop

claiming that US and its allies saved

the Muslims in Kosovo and Bosnia.

What they did really was far from

When the Bosnian Muslims

fought back, the West put an arms

embargo on them. This arms

embargo left the Bosnian Muslims

with no means to protect them-

selves, which made it easy for the

Serbs in Muslims cleansing in

Bosnia. By the time West inter-

vened, the Serbs had already

point should be added how the

West barred Bosnia from joining

OIC. In case of Kosovo, West

intervened not because they

wanted to help the Kosovo Alba-

nians, but to stop them from becom-

ing independent. They did it solely

to help Serbia as they knew Serbia

alone couldn't stop the Kosovo

freedom fighters. I am not against

those who speak in support of US,

but it is extremely disturbing when

one whitewashes the US role in

Responding to Zaki's letter ("Why

were they forgiven?", December

25), I ask the Awami League as a

citizen to respond his argument, to

decisions of Sheikh Muiib? Is it not

hypocrisy? Why on earth the next

generation should suffer? Those

who do not accept Bangladesh are

How long will this Razakar issue

Why does not AL respect the

create the right public opinion.

Bosnia and Kosovo.

forgiven?"

always free to leave.

be kept pending?

AMA

"Why they were

SMAH

Dhaka

saving the Muslims from atrocity.

the US supporters

Ashraf

on my movement. I hope it is clear now.

It is simply preposterous to say that all Awami Leaguers who were taken by the occupation army were killed. Many were kept in detention for 9 months, some were killed and some released at some point of time. It varied from person to person, for reasons best known to them. The British MPs wanted to meet some local Awami League leaders present in Dhaka and I was just one of the dozen whom they met. [They also met Barrister Mainul Hosein and his brother Mr. Anwar Hosain Monju].

(10) How could you say that I seemed to be happy at the arrest of my rival? Where did you get that in my letter? I only said that the man who conspired against me in 1971 himself landed in prison later. There is no question of celebration or becoming happy. I have only cited Almighty's action in this regard.

(11) Yes, I was a victim of circumstances. It so happened that I had a stepsister whose husband had taken up the Tabliq course and they used to reside in Saudi Arabia for most of the time. During 1971 they were in Pakistan and voluntarily issued a statement in favour of the Pakistan army. After that statement my name was also flashed though separately on someone's instructions, which I came to know later. I frantically tried to send in a rejoinder and disown what appeared in the press, but miserably failed. Lastly I met a Major of the Pakistan Army [who later became a Brigadier and died along with Ziaul Huq in a plane crash in Bahawalpur]. This gentleman was in charge of the PID then and used to sit at the Dainik Bangla head office in Motijheel. He expressed his inability to do anything because he said the statement had come from Rawalpindi [i.e. the Army headquarters]. Despite all my sincere intentions, I felt helpless once again and swallowed the bitter pill, which has been pricking and giving me all the trouble over the years. Mr.A.B.M.Musa, the senior journalist, who was with Pakistan Observer in Dhaka then would know better and could throw some light on the matter if he wants.

(12) I have not gone through what Mr.Saiduzzaman Rawshan ever wrote, but I assert that it is anything but the truth. I throw a challenge to all those who write or speak about me in the language of Mr.Rawshan. If anyone can prove that I went out of the Dhaka city limit for a single moment during the occupation period, then I shall quit politics for all times to come and give up my citizenship. How could I roam around the whole country during those 9 months when I did not go out even for the Jumma prayers regularly and the army was constantly after

And the question of legal action against Mr.Saiduzzaman will arise when I get his book and his address. Mr. Zaman is probably as elusive as you are Mr. Hosain or Mr. Alam; people without addresses. Either you lack the guts or are unaware of the minimum courtesy in this

Thank you Daily Star for your total co-operation.

Advocate A.K.Faezul Huq faezul@hotmail.com, Dhaka

ter, Opposition Leader, and the women's rights activists strive to

It's very easy to predict what the SAARC cumulation issue will be.

You'll find for the former.

Let BNP go to the extra mile

of course excluding Razakars, Albadrs, Al-shams and few Bangalees who still believe in Pakistan -- responded to the call and joined Bangabandhu after March 7, fought back and liberated our country from the Pakistani occupation. It was Bangabandhu who started the fire, defied the Pakistani rule. and called our people to unite and to fight. Again it is the people who fought the war. The whole nation paid the price, our mothers and

sisters lost their chastity, our boys their lives and a new country "Bangladesh" was born. During that period there was only one party called the Awami League led by its leader Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who can be claimed as the man who made the whole thing happen. Today's BNP supporters also worked under the banner of Awami League.

Shafigul Islam Dhaka

Simi's death'

Simi's death has proved the extent to which our male counterpart is suffering from superiority complex. The male of this country cannot accept the fact that female could be talented or independent. Simi's death has very much proved this

There are numerous examples of male superiority complex in our country. We hope our Prime Minisprevent more Simi's from meeting the same fate

Dr. Lailun Nahar

SAARC cumulation issue

government's decision on the Simply add the number of BTMA members who are MPs or ran for Parliament in October and deduct from that those of the BGMEA.

MA, on e-mail

teachers Some outgoing members of DUTA have criticised the PM for her com-

report (DS, 4th December) confirms

that the liberals of the government

party are in favour of initiating

necessary actions to create an

atmosphere, a climate of confi-

dence to ensure the joining of the AL

members in the Parliament. It is true

that the coalitions have two third

majorities, but without an opposition

a democratic society is incomplete

and truncated. The voice of the 40

per cent of our voters must not be

ignored. The greatest parliamentar-

ian of the last century stated

soberly, "in Victory magnanimity".

Shahabuddin Mahtab

Active politics by

Why hartal again?

Promises are meant to be broken?

I am a well wisher of both BNP and Awami League but I am utterly disgusted by the political culture prevailing in Bangladesh. Anyone with a sane mind would feel the same. While in power, Sheikh Hasina promised not to call hartal anymore for the sake of country's betterment, but now she and her party are finding every chance to go for hartal again.

Sheikh Hasina claims that hartal is a fundamental right. Is it our fundamental right only when we are in the opposition? At the same time I urge BNP leaders to extend their welcoming gesture to AL instead of ridiculing them like, "finally AL have come to senses". Just good manner is what we need to get these parties rid of their bitter relationship.

Khairul Hasan Surrey, UK

A gentleman is the one who is considerate towards others. The definition of a gentleman as the adage states, "is one who does not inflict pain on others ". Some English writers held poor opinions regarding the people of the lower Indo-Gangetic delta.

This was only a preamble. A

ments on teachers' politics in the university (December 31). These freethinkers have harped on the usual freedom of expression. But that is not the issue. The issue is the active participation of

at the Secretariat but also at electoral constituencies? What about the

Kibria has a point, but could do lot better



There may be at least some truth in what Mr. Kibria has said in reply to The Daily Star editorial dated January 7, 2002. Why not the whole truth, Mr. Kibria?

Don't distort history

Recently there was a report in your

daily about a discussion meeting

True that President Shahabuddin approved the new Ordinance that Mr. Kibria branded as "conspirational manoeuvres by certain parties". Also true is the cruel ment and protest. But why the bucks

must stop there, Mr. Kibria? Why you and your AL colleagues dodge the truth that the Ordinance was the only recourse the caretaker government had to conduct a free and fair election? Do you have the moral courage to own up the truth that during their last days in government AL relaxed licensing for guns and issued hundreds if not thousands such licences. It is a no secret to who those licences were issued. How about the last-minute transfers of civil servants not only

terror in public life that topped factors that handed down humiliating defeat to AL? Who knows better than Mr. Kibria that donors closed doors and foreign investors stayed away because of that terror? I have had much admiration for you, Mr. Kibria, not so much for

your self-hyped first-class-first academic credentials, but for your firm resolve as Finance Minister against loan defaulters and your commitment to bring discipline and due process in managing our money and finance. Petty politicking does not do justice to your excellent credentials and experiences. You can do lot better than character assassination of President Shahabuddin who, in your own words, has been "lionised...for so long". Is it not possible that there may be at least some truth in at least two-third electoral constituents' lionising Mr. Sahabuddin?

Will the lion in Mr. Kibria and AL please stand up and help stop the mud slinging and petty politicking for the good of Bangladesh and AL Syed Nazmul Ahsan

Kuala Lumpur

the university teachers in national politics, inside and outside the campus. This is not the norm in other countries. Teaching is a profession that needs absolute dedication, and direct and active involvement of the teachers and the students in national politics is neither necessary nor desirable. Moreover, different lobbies reveal partiality in criticism, and they are not at all neutral in supporting or criticising any political party as well. This is obvious from a study of the records of last several years.

Of course politicisation in this country is an issue. To draw the boundary line, may be open public debates on the issue can be arranged. The primary responsibility is on the political leaders, despite the plea that one party was neutralising the activities of the predecessor. We have to get out of this vicious cycle. Political chase has become a profitable pastime!

Abd Dhaka

assault on minorities in the aftermath of the elections that The Daily It seems to be a rhetorical gues-Star was the first in media to docu-