The Daily Star

It can't go on like this



When will our learning period be over?

Somebody has to do something about our Cricket Team. It can't get any worse than this. The match against NZ shows how low the performance of the players at this moment. Throughout this

like to see happening.

"Illegal" charges

bank charges. Some of the foreign

banks had been deducting

charges under heads, which do

not even exist in private, or govern-

ment banks! For example- in a

current account if anyone exceeds

seven transactions in a calendar

month then Tk.12.50 (before VAT)

is charged for each "extra" trans-

action calling it a "transaction fee"

as per their own whim! Another

example is "minimum balance

fee"- if the account balance goes

below a certain amount, the bank

set their computer-program to

money from the customers' depos-

its in any way it chooses? If banks

are "scheduled" institutions under

the central bank then heads of

charges should be absolutely

same between foreign, private and

governments banks -- only the

rates of charges may vary. So,

instead of preventing the foreign

bank(s) from collecting such

"illegal" charges from the public,

"Finland's Army"

and a polite reply

This is in reference to the letter

"Finland's Army" (September 20)

which is a reply to my earlier letter. In

the letter the writer Emile made

personal attack and also tried to

Chittagong

Can a bank just take away

deduct a sort of penalty!

S. Hasnat

Dhaka

Disappointing debate Sadly, the debate on law and order in the Parliament on 16th September was a disappointment to those seeking real solutions to the law and order problems in Bangladesh Following the release of a UNDP report entitled "Human Security: In Search of Justice and Dignity" only the previous day, which detailed the serious problems of insecurity and law and order experienced by citizens, and warned of the dangers of trivialising the issue by apportioning blame to political parties, and immediately following a donor meeting where the Government assured donors that law and order was 'top priority', both the political parties reduced the discussion to one of petty party politics.

As reported in The Daily Star on 17th September, "the debate on law and order was rather queer... .the AL lawmakers focussed on

the law and order at present, while the BNP legislators went back to the days of the past AL regime to prove their failure on the crucial front". I am appalled at this trivialisation and over-simplification by the so-called representatives of the people of what is a serious and complex issue, and one which requires the collective action of all concerned-government, opposition, civil society, police and the citizens.

When will MPs of both parties our "democratic" government has take their responsibilities seriously imposed VAT to be paid on top of and rise above petty party politics to such unjust deductions! So, who do the job they are supposed to do-will help us? represent the citizens? A Distressed Observer

A concerned reader Dhaka

A part-time mayor!

Dhaka City Corporation elected a new mayor after more than eight vears. The expectation was that the new mayor would break the cycle of inaction and negligence. But sadly, we do not see any difference in running the Dhaka City affairs.

hide facts. Before the elections, BNP had 1. To make a point one should not misinform the readers. That is why I three aspirants for the position of mayor -- Mr. Khoka, Mr. Abbas and protested the false information Mr. Mintu. The first two were MPs provided in one letter that Finland and full ministers. Still, the BNP nomination went to Mr. Khoka tion). probably on assumption that he will

2. Mr Emile said that in Europe people could discuss about the military freely. Indeed they can and they do. But the readers of the European dailies do not waste their valuable time on military issue. They discuss defence budget etc. But all of them understand the importance of keeping an army, air force or navy, Many Europeans are against keeping a royal family but I did not find a single European who are against keeping a military force (which many readers of The Daily Star do).

ICC Championship Trophy, I have heard several commentators talking about the Bangladesh's Test status. Some even convinced, including me, that Kenya is much better team than ours, and should be awarded the Test Status.

So, now what are we going to do to come out of this avalanche? In my opinion, the whole team (except 2-3 bright young players) should be sacked (at least temporarily), we definitely need fresh blood, also fresh mind. Let's face it, our naturally talented players can't take any more loss, their moral is at the lowest point. At the beginning of every match the whole team can't think of anything other than losing miserably. It hurts, we are all feeling the pain. One other thing, the team needs a psychiatrist for the mental conditioning to face up to a big game.

We got to fight to keep our Test status. Let's not waste this opportunity. I urge every creative mind to chip in to form a national consensus about the action must be taken to save our national pride, The Bangladesh Cricket Team.

Nasim Haider Dhahran, Saudi Arabia

3. The writer also tried to estabsegments of people in our society. And that is the last thing we would lish that the economy of Bangladesh is better than Burma. But the fact is Burma's economy is much stronger than Bangladesh. Burma is a member of ASEAN. American companies are more interested to invest in Burma than Bangladesh. Recently the Government has Other South Asian countries are also developing quicker than imposed 15% VAT on all types of

Bangladesh. 4. For the kind information of Mr Emile when I talked about the Bangladeshi and world military I talked on the basis of good deal of knowledge about the military. In the past I wrote military articles for national dailies of Bangladesh.

5. I myself was a victim of corruption and I decided to leave the country, as I was sick of the corruption prevailing in Bangladesh. The writer suggested me to stay in Europe and not to come back. In Europe I have to study hard and work hard to be some body. In Bangladesh I need to give bribe to be somebody. It's better for me as well to stay in Europe and work hard instead of becoming a member of a corrupt society.

A Bangladeshi in Europe Europe

Terrorist defined

Quite interestingly the newest word in my 5-year-old daughter's embryonic vocabulary is 'Terrorist'! Being asked of its correct meaning by my ever-curious daughter I had to search for dictionaries, journals and the Internet but was bewildered by the spacious variety of interpretation of the word. It turned out to be (as someone has said) that one group's terrorist is another group's freedom fighter.

What do I explain to my nagging daughter? Help wanted A Man in Uniform

US-Iraq crisis This is a response to Mr. MA's view

Dhaka

regarding US and Iraq (September 23). ing. has no army at all (a misinforma-In the second paragraph of his letter, Mr. MA said, "Saddam Hussein has had ten years in which he could have allowed UN weapons inspections and destroy his stockpiles of bio and chemical weapons." By using the words 'could have' in his sentence, Mr. MA is trying to say indirectly that Saddam Hussein did not actually co-operate UN weapons inspectors in past ten years. But we all know that Saddam Hussein allowed weapon inspectors to work till 1998. What is the motive behind spreading this kind of confusing information? Then again Mr MA asked, "If Saddam Hussein does not have bad combine Iraq's easy to hide biologi-

intentions, why is he protecting his stocks of chemical and bio weapons?" On the basis of Mr. MA's question, I can create an analogy: As Saddam Hussein has stocks of chemical and bio weapons, he has bad intention. If we agree with Mr. MA's logic then we can easily say, "As Mr. Bush has the biggest stockpile of chemical and bio weapons, he has the worst intention!"

I do agree that Saddam should not be defended because of his heinous acts like killing thousands of Kurds, oppression against his opposition and innumerable crimes against humanity but will it be a wise move for an outsider like USA to attack Iraq and change an oppressive regime? As Iraq is a sovereign nation, only the Iraqi people have their exclusive right to overthrow Saddam Hussein.

In another section, Mr. MA praised the role of NATO for saving innocent lives of many in Kosovo to support Uncle Sam. Well, I also agree that NATO did a good job in Kosovo against Serbs but why did Uncle Sam remain inactive and not use NATO force against Russia and China despite their continuous violation of human rights? This is another example of double standard/inconsistent foreign policy maintained by Uncle Sam.

Lastly I would like to say that we should behave rationally and should not/never behave like a spokesperson of the White House.

Rajib Kalabagan, Dhaka

Pre-emption can prevent a bloody conflict later

When Hitler was preaching vengeance and rebuilding the German military machine, Winston Churchill was the only voice calling for immediate military action to pre-empt Germany from starting a new war in Europe. But his own Conservative Party ostracised him. Conservative Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin even accused him of warmonger-

Saddam Hussein has forfeited his right to govern Iraq by invading his neighbours without any provoca-

cal weapons with the terrorists' skills, can be devastating. Only by public dismantling Saddam's brutal regime can such bio-chemical threat be reduced, if not completely elimi-

nated. Mahmood Elahi Ottawa, Ontario, Canada The real Hitler!

TO THE EDITOR

The US argued vociferously that the credibility of the UN was at peril, due to the non-compliance of Iraq. However, unexpectedly Saddam accepted the unconditional return of the UN inspectors. Therefore. one would have anticipated the Bush administration to view this as a victory, and should have silenced the war drums. To the contrary, the Bush administration is still preparing for a military strike.

Saddam is no doubt a brutal dictator, but in realm of foreign policy, the facts on the ground make the Bush Administration a far better comparison to the Nazis. Even the Germans, who are perhaps the most authoritative on the subject, are making this claim, as shown by the recent comments of the Senior German minister Herta Daeubler-Gmelin, Like the Nazis, the US is constantly engaged in the expansion of her "influence" by the use of force and installing puppet regimes. The testimonies of many demonstrate that the CIA has replaced the role of the Gestapo. Arbitrary imprisonment, torture, summary execution has become the norm and we

had a glimpse after the Mazar-e-Sherif massacre Christian in the Bush administration and the powerful Zionist lobby, coupled with the likes of Donald Rumsfield and Richard Perl. inspired by McCarthvism, are even preparing for pre-emptive nuclear strike on Iraq. The former camp would probably justify such actions as fulfilment of the biblical prophesies, as is being argued currently for the confiscation of the lands from the Palestinians. Whereas the latter would provide political grounds like

cis Fukiyama can then really claim the end of History.

UK. London

written and passionately argued essays by distinguished ex-civil servants. More often than not these President and his advisers.

I have had the pleasure of working ers read such columns. The US US is a superpower out of control,

are uniformly insensitive to the feelings and fears of the American

The valuable wisdom and analytical prowess of the former secretaries is better used to help Bangladesh grow a sustainable democracy and a vibrant civil society. Bangladesh has a dearth of top notch people like your columnists; America does not. It will be beneficial for all of us if these distinguished gentlemen turned all their energies homeward. FS

Missouri, USA

One-eyed civil society

Khorshed Alam -- a fish vendor was killed by a petrol bomb thrown on a bus by hartal supporters near Bangla Motor on 01 September. Media has killed the story of his tragic death. There is no demand for immediate trial and exemplary punishment of the killers. No outcry by civil society heavy weights. No fast unto death by any group. What a terrible contrast when Sabequnnahar Sony was killed in a crossfire in BUET.

Sony was a victim of JCD hoodlums (allegedly) and hence the outcry. Our so-called intellectuals of Awami Gharana remain silent when BCL activists throw bombs. But what about the civil society?

Khorshed Alam has left a family of three children and a widow. I want just compensation for his family from BRTC who runs buses to thwart hartal. Police must nab the killers and bring them to justice with the same seriousness they are trying to catch the killers of Sabequnnahar Sony. Incidentally Sony was killed in crossfire and Kausar was killed with a deliberate attempt.

QSAhmed Dhaka

The not so great navy

We have read a lot about our great army. Let me tell you something about our "not-so-great" navy.

There is a stretch of road besides the Karnaphully, starting from the diversion to the Chittagong Airport to the Patenga point, which has a sizeable naval installation. It used to be a favourite place for me to take my family and sit on the embankment, enjoy the river breeze, see the twinkling lights of the Kafco establishment across the river.

Now it is no more. As soon as anyone is there, you will be approached by a number of local boys - literally competing - to sell you chilled beer or some other hard drink. There are more than twenty tin sheds, which do this business on this stretch of road.

I had the opportunity to ask some Naval Commanders whom I met at a dinner party, why did they not evict these illegal bars. They replied that they have an understanding with the locals. 'Don't trouble us we wont trouble you'. This reminds me of 'see no evil' - while passing that road, 'do no evil' - of evicting them, 'speak no evil'- of all the illegal activities on that road and the notso-great navy can peacefully see the sunset from their observation deck inside the Patenga complex.

salary equal to that of the nurses' I know some doctors who have returned or are thinking of returning to their country due to this.

NN Dhaka "JS concludes in a chaos"

This refers to your editorial of September 19 issue. We are giving our MPs a wide variety of facilities. In exchange they indeed give us much more what no nation in the world can avail of.

We have been awarded as No. 1 corrupt nation in the world according to the TI rating. This unique award get only one country in the world and we being blessed with our competent politicians have achieved this rare position two consecutive times. Frequent hartals, corruption, incidents like murder, rape, extortion etc are the consequences of deterioration of law and order situation: what we are enjoying the most and have become the part of our sufferings like natural calamities. The dire consequence of the above effects is that we are going to lose the higher educated section of our society

It is unbelievable how the Zionists are spreading their tentacles everywhere and actually controlling the whole world successfully! I can't help but admire their determination and tenacity. Thanks a lot to The Daily Star and Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed for enlightening us.

Shukla Mirza On e-mail

DHAKA WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 25, 2002

"Criminal Commissioner"

This letter is in response to Mr. Daivaan Murshed's letter "Criminal commissioner?" (September 19).

I agree with the writer on the vagueness of our concern for Shahid (ward commissioner, who is alleged by murder charges) while larger versions of Shahid are still inside the Parliament. However Mr. Daiyan has to understand that a newspaper's role is to smite our conscience by credible reporting. From that point of view, I believe The Daily Star has made a right decision on making Shahid's criminal background as a valid point. Otherwise. it will be so naive to let people like Shahid get away smoothly with their





After putting ban on plying of

the more than 20-years-old

vehicles on the streets, and

the partial ban on two-stroke

three wheelers, the air of

Dhaka City has become a

little bit bearable. Now it's the

turn for noise pollution to be

It's a common belief in

Bangladesh that making

noise is an inviolable citi-

zenry right; so everybody can

make noise, as loud as

he/she wants, even at dead

of night. In Bangladesh one

can play music or preach

(popularly known as 'oaz

mahfil') through loudspeak-

ers all night. Sound boxes

can easily be used in oaz

mahfil, but the organisers

of loudspeaker after sunset.

Even during daytime one

needs to have permission

from the authority to use a

loudspeaker. This law has got

lost in oblivion in our country

since long ago. Except for

Azan (call for prayer) nobody

Law does not permit using

prefer loudspeakers.

dealt with.

since our motherland is no longer

is forbidden not the use of it. Its use is to be banned. Vehicle using hydraulic horn is to be fined. Playing music in public buses plying on the street is to be banned as well. Picnic parties should not be allowed to use loudspeaker, they can easily use the sound box.

Everybody has the right to sleep in peace at night. Nobody has the right to compel others to listen to music or preaching or whatever it may

Another question who has given permission to the lottery ticket vendors to use loudspeaker?

Faruque Hasan Dhanmandi, Dhaka



Yamin Zakaria Unsolicited advice Almost every issue carried well

days, such columns seek to advise President Bush, and occasionally Tony Blair and others, about what to do about foreign policy. Some such articles, drawing on the apparently vast experience of the authors, also call into question the sanity or common-sense of the American

for a think tank in Washington DC and I can assure your readers that neither the President of the US nor his advisenvoy in Dhaka probably passes them on to her superiors at the State Department where they are filed for posterity. Frankly speaking, most of the articles in question are simply voluble regurgitation of the same line:

"security" and US "interests". Fran-

be giving up his other responsibilities once elected as mayor. Till today, the new mayor is nothing but a part-time caretaker of the city, and that explains guite well the dengue menace in the city among the scores of other problems it faces. It is sheer irresponsibility on the part of the government to have let the DCC run like this. If the newly elected mayor finds his ministerial job and MP position so dear to his heart that he cannot let them go, then he would better reconsider his mayor position thus saving the city from ruination due to negligence.

It is too late for the question, but why was a person nominated at the first place who only intended to be a part-time mayor?

Zunaid Kabir Canada

A wrong voice of Bangladeshi films

Like myself many other Bangladeshi film viewers would agree that a major point made by most of our films is conflict arising from economic inequality in society. Most of these films show that the "poor class" of people are loathed and treated miserably by the "rich class". In many films I have seen that the domestic workers are made to work all day long and their masters make their jobs as hard as possible to increase their miserv to the maximum. All in all the films show that a large section of "rich people" treat the "poor" as nothing more than slaves.

The influence of the Bangladeshi film industry on our society is tremendous. A large number of people, especially from the lower-income groups, visit the cinema houses regularly. Consequently they see such films which many of our respectable filmmakers enthusiastically make. But do these filmmakers realise what impact these films create on our society and what dire consequences they might bring in the future?

The impact of showing such films may have already started. In one instance, I saw a chauffeur making fun of a party that his employer would be throwing on the occasion of the employer's child's birthday. He was describing the party as a "Boro loker khel" (a rich man's whim)

Our films are a strong voice and maybe used as a strong weapon to correct the wrongs of our society. Instead, it looks like most of our films pose a threat of giving rise to a violent conflict between two large

Why attack US!

US misunderstood!

that an amazingly false accusation.

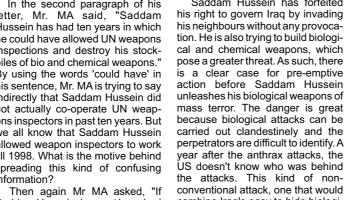
I was amazed to read a letter by Yamin, from UK (September 23)

accusing the US of racism. I have lived in both countries and I find

Race is less of an issue in the US than in any other European

country I can think of. Non-white immigrants have probably done

better in the US than in any other predominantly white country in



the world

Of course there have been abuses in the past and there continue to be issues. But by and large it is still an extremely tolerant society and one, which embraces immigrants not shunning them like the Europeans.

every day.

TAli, Dhaka

The degree to which people misunderstand the US is amazing. It's not just a Bangladeshi phenomenon; this negative attitude is prevalent all over the world. For some reason the US, although the greatest country in the world and one where everyone including its critics wants to move to has spectacularly failed to justify its actions.

First of all every time Iraq comes up, the Palestinians seem to follow. I am not an expert and frankly I'm not very interested either on the Palestinian question. I don't subscribe to the Muslim brotherhood school of thought. Look at how our Pakistani Muslim brothers treated us or how our brothers in Saudi Arabia treat us now.

The US support for the current Israeli leadership is abhorrent. Nevertheless, it is the democratically elected leadership of a long-standing US ally. We should also take into account the fact that the US is a democracy and in any democracy a vocal powerful lobby pulls a lot of weight. This is compounded by the emotional connection the Christian Right feels towards Israel and the disorganisation of the Arab-Americans.

There are plenty of people in the US who dislike their own governments support for Israel. It's not just some monolithic policy. The Bush family itself is famous for not caring a hoot for Israel. Bush Senior's Secretary of State, James Baker, even had some colourful comments about American Jews and their voting habits

Although it should be mentioned that were the Palestinians to use only peaceful means, US public opinion would quickly swing in their favour.

The Israeli issue is no justification for postponing a war on Iraq. As far as I am concerned the only question about the war on Iraq, is how quickly it'll be over and what will take its place afterwards?

Azad. Dhaka

Saddam is not that bad of a guy, the UN ought to be listened to, etc. The sheer condescending tone of such Chittagong articles makes them no different from the hundreds posted all over the

Environmental Third World every day. It is a testament to your commitment to free depredation speech that we get to see this output

There was a small article on your 20th September issue regarding The President of the United Unocal and Petrobangla being States has a whole set of advisers unable to reach an agreement over and experts who give him round the Magurchhara. Unocal, having clock advice based on the national bought both assets and liabilities of interest of their country. He is in little Occidental which was responsible need of unsolicited advice from well for the Magurchhara explosion, meaning foreign civil servants who should fully compensate Bangladesh; not only for the wasted gas, but also for the devastation of wild-

> Big business (or individuals), no matter what their political and financial clout is, should not be allowed to get away with environmental depredation, be it rainforest destruction in Magurchhara, illegal filling up of lowlands in Ashulia or mangrove forest destruction in Sonadia Your newspaper has printed several laudable news items on local environmental problems. I request you to publish an informative feature on Magurchhara and what Unocal and Petrobangla are doing about it lately.

"Saudis to recruit 4,200 Bangladeshi medics"

This is in reference to the news item "Saudis to recruit 4,200 Bangladeshi medics" by Rafiq Hasan. There is an information in it that "A leading recruiting agent said doctors and engineers usually get salary between 2000 and 3000 rivals.

Recently the Guardian exposed the The amount of salary that he had real reason behind the British monmentioned is the one that applies arch King Edward VIII's abdication when people go through recruiting in 1936. It was not because Wallis agents assigned by private companies. The doctors' salary is between was a conflict of protocol and pas-4000 and 4500 riyals (about 60000 sion, after all rules can be changed taka) when they go through the to accommodate royal whim. (For government of KSA. When BOESL example, King Henry VIII who had given their ad in newspaper, married numerous women, and they had mentioned this amount because it was against the teach-(4000 to 4500 riyals) which would ings of the Catholic Church he include some allowances, and the changed the official faith of his total salary would be about 70000 kingdom to the Church of England.) Bangladeshi taka. Senior nurses in According to documents released to the government hospitals of KSA the Guardian by the FBI, the King have salaries of 2000 rivals. When was forced to step down because doctors from our country go there Mrs. Wallis Simpson was a Nazi through these recruiting agents, sympathiser they feel humiliated to see their

should be allowed to make noise above 60-decibel. Importing of hydraulic horn

safe for us. People will try their best criminal backgrounds just because they have been elected by their to flee this country and those who are now abroad will fear to set their constituency feet in the motherland. Moreover, it might be the case

It is the legal right of our MPs to be served by the poor taxpayers of the country with enough perks. That is why the bills regarding the perks of the MPs are passed without acrimony in the JS. But it seems that it is not their duty to serve the people in return, rather it has become a matter of mercy if they will serve the people or not.

Real reason behind

I enjoyed reading Dr. Fakhruddin

Ahmed's thought provoking and

well-researched piece, "Stealing

someone else's land is terrorism!'

the British were kept in the dark

through an "unofficial gag order"

about the romance of King Edward

VIII and the American divorcee

Wallis Simpson, but in America that

romance was an open-secret, and

today, the situation reversed. Let me

quote Dr. Ahmed, "Through an

unofficial gag order, in the American

media, it is tantamount to sacrilege

to question any of Israel's criminal

activities" whereas the European

media openly exposing "Israel's

total domination of American media

are decades apart there is a com-

mon thread of similarity -- the key

players in the shadow are the same.

impson was a divorcee and there

But, although the two scenarios

and exploitation of America".

It is interesting how in the 1930s

King Edward's

abdication

(September 19)

Islam

Tangail

Zafar Hadi

California, USA

holding public offices.

Let the president be neutral

where people of his constituency

are unaware of his criminal back-

ground or he might won vote by

black money or vote rigging, who

knows? Therefore I think The Daily

Star has made a legitimate issue by

reporting on Shahid's criminal

background and should do it more

on these kind of people who are

Political parties' respect for and attitude towards the President is very frustrating. The constitutional Head of State is forced to work under the government's order. A couple of months ago, BNP forced the then President, Prof. A.Q.M Badruddoza Chowdhury to resign in an embarrassing manner. This

shows the freedom of the President is very limited.

BNP is not the only party who tries to control the President, Awami League also did the same. After getting service from Justice Shahbuddin Ahmed for five years, Awami League started to humiliate him as soon as AL lost the election. The President should not work for any party but work for the common people of the country. We, the common people of the country think that the political parties have no right to ask the President to resign or to interfere in his work. Being neutral

is the President's constitutional right and no party can pull him to their

I hope that the government along with all the political parties should cooperate with the President and give him the opportunity to be neu-

Arafat A. Islam Lalmatia, Dhaka

Notice

The readers are requested to send their comments on 'USA and world politics' (9/11 and aftermath. US and Middle East crisis, US on Iraq etc). -- Editor

Afrin Zaman Dhaka