

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.

Kala Fruq arrested

We have already learnt how in a unique situation has the notorious Kala Faruq been nabbed from inside the aircraft of a British Airways flight on 4 November 2002.

My question is how this criminal could slip through the sleuth fingers of the security team at the Zia International Airport? Don't they keep photographs of persons to be detained at their desks? I think they do. But what happened in this case? Moreover, how could the Passport Office issue a passport to him in a different name after all those necessary police investigations? As good law abiding citizens while we bear unnecessary harassment from different quarters at the passport office to receive a previous passport, Kala Faruq is given a fresh passport on a silver platter! And also the crook gets NOC from the foreign ministry, the Home Ministry and the Cultural Ministry to sneak out of the country-- out of the of the long hand of law.

My hats off to the gentleman who with his quick wit has helped nab the criminal. I hope law will take its own course in punishing Kala Faruq. But of course I would request the authority to take care of his heart.

Wahid Shafi
Dhaka

"Will our elected govt tell us what is happening?"

I am a regular reader of your esteemed daily since its inception. I have always liked your commentaries and have been in agreement with your views in at least 90% if not more. But your recent commentary on army has been disappointing. Unlike your usual factual commentaries this time you have failed to project both sides of the present critical situation prevailing in the country which is too serious a matter to be dealt with so simply.

The world situation has changed. The sovereignty of countries are under threat from within and without. At such a time, one should look into national problems very carefully taking into the all aspects

PG Muhammad
On e-mail

In his commentary Mr. Anam wanted to know the legal basis of army crackdown. If the cat can kill the mouse, it does not matter whether it's a black or a white cat. "Ends justify the means". If the crackdown fails, we will raise the question as to its legality; if it succeeds we the ordinary people are not going to ask any question about its legal basis. Let the partisan 'distinguished citizens' rack their brain as to that question.

In a 'Mogher Mulluk' who can expect human rights? During the last few decades a handful of *Shantrashis*, most of them in disguise of political cadres, and through them their political mentors, have turned this country into a 'Mogher Mulluk' through establishing a reign of terror. Now they have no scope to save themselves in the pretext of human rights. Only the members of armed forces, who are involved in present crack down, should take utmost care that no innocent people suffers, even a bit, in their hands.

Hundreds of allegations are there against our limping police force, even though I believe it has the ability to curb crime drastically, if it has given the full liberty. To be

practical, it will not get even in distant future, that necessary liberty. To change this situation a complete overhauling of political culture is needed. That complete overhauling will take, under the present political leaderships and parties, God knows in how many decades! During this interlude period, if the *Shantrashis* are brought to justice through tough measures, so be it. Let us forget utopian thoughts and be practical.

Faruque Hasan
Dhanmandi, Dhaka

Army drive and HR issue

A fellow Bangladeshi in the UK got my attention on a quote in an article that appeared on BBC Online, "The anti-crime drive may be a popular move now, but human rights groups such as Amnesty International say that the overall cost is too high."

But, what about the cost of the victims of these criminals? That is not too high? The crime rate in Bangladesh has to be brought down to manageable bounds and then install remedial measures to address the core issues - poverty, illiteracy, neglect - that ultimately spawn crime.

Amnesty International, please take note.
AA

Chief also directed his soldiers not to harass innocent people. Rather, he has asked them to include patriotic persons in their move. It is a remarkable suggestion and any move to eliminate crime can't be successful without people's support. Commissioned officers as well as JCO and NCO shouldn't forget this fact in order to achieve the target.

Oli Md. Abdullah Chowdhury
Sylhet

Good move

I have been following your coverage on the army crackdown through your Internet edition and I wish to congratulate the Bangladesh Government for taking a bold step in cracking down on the unruly and criminal elements of society. Specially, BNP deserves commendations for cracking down ruthlessly on its own party members and activists to bring justice and peace to the country. Had the ruling coalition not done this; the move would have been easily made to appear as politically motivated against the opposition. One sincerely hopes that this sensitive action is carried out with care and high degree of responsibility from all concerned. Particularly the unconvincing number of heart failures of the persons

discussion on fundamental reforms in the mandate, structure, governance, organisation and compensation structure of the police. Ultimately it is the police that will have to shoulder the responsibility of protecting the civic life not the army. The present army action is a fire-fighting activity.

The need remains to address the causes which if not removed will bring the army once again after another round of public suffering.

M. Anis Motiwala
Karachi, Pakistan

Neutral comments required

I have been going through your letters column for the past few days. It appears that these are views inclined to one particular political philosophy rather than anything written neutrally. May I for that just write down few points neutrally for the readers and check whether these are acceptable to the cross sections

1. Irrespective of parties, some political leaders are linked with criminals/terrorists.
2. It seems that the majority people are supporting the army's action.
3. The present govt. accepted the fact that they failed to curb terrorism to the extent they desired in first

and the PM.

I would like to have a look at the beginning. The government took in power hand in hand with 4-party alliance. It failed to control or dismantle its own student wing. In bare sights politics itself has caused all evils. We like to blame politicians for every evil in the country, be it crime be it corruption. We have voted godfathers and murky millionaires in the last three elections. Dozens of "mastans" have defeated their relative compassionate opponents. The psychology was "he is a better mastan, he can protect us best". Dozens of murky millionaires have defeated relatively more honest opponents. The psychology was "he is rich, he can spend more and do more for us". We ourselves have promoted crime and corruption sending them to the parliaments. Our intelligentsia have sullied and failed to warn the voter of potential danger. We failed to think of long term consequences. Our bureaucracy is reputed as the most corrupt in the world, so is our police department.

The army is on the street, the mastans are in hiding. When army goes back they will come out again. People will realise that army on the street was better. Then what happens?

Amnesty International is con-

Zakaria S Khondker
USA

Whom to vote?

In one of my last letters, I mentioned that I voted for Awami League in last year's elections for the only one reason that, if they came to power they could not put the blame for all the miseries in the country on "the previous government". Surely, this is what the BNP Government has been doing right from the beginning of their tenure.

Well, already during the last elections I was thinking, if we just could have an alternative party or person to vote for!

L. Rafique
Khulna

Sangshad Bhaban complex: Worthy to be a world heritage

This has reference to the two letters published on November 4 on the move to make addition and alternation to architect Louis Kahn's National Assembly Complex.

The World Heritage List prepared by UNESCO's World Heritage Centre includes a number of architectural works of the Modern period. The entire city of Brasilia has been recognised, along with the Bauhaus in Germany and its sites of Weimar and Dessau done by master architects Henry van der Velde and Walter Gropius. Even a small residence named Tugendhat House in Brno, Czech Republic by another modern master Mies van der Rohe is protected as world heritage.

It is about time that our National Assembly Complex is declared a World Heritage by UNESCO and thus, receives protection from unscrupulous acts of addition and alternation. The reasons are clearly spelled out in the letters by Kashaf M. Chowdhury and Jalal Ahmed.

It is also true that additions and extensions is an essence of time and in many cases great works of architecture have gone through such renovation, Guggenheim Museum by Frank Lloyd Wright being the most famous. However, in all the cases, such moves have been very sensitively done with large international competitions and the jury comprising of leaders in world architecture. The eventual winners in these competitions were from the great architects of these times. Any move to make additions violating the Sher-e-Bangla Ngor master plan by the Public Works Department is therefore sad and deplorable.

Mamnoon Murshed Chowdhury,
Architect
Dhaka

"Miss Photogenic"

This is in response to Mr. Shareef's writing expressing his views on beauty pageants. First of all, in a beauty pageant, women are not really shown or treated as "objects" as said by Mr. Shareef. This is a misunderstanding that beauty pageants degrade women. In these contests women are judged by their character/personality as well as beauty. I admit that the way the contest is held is objectionable to some people. But if beauty pageants show women as "objects", does our society offer women any better position than a clay doll?

My question is should we continue to sleep, snoring and acting like nothing has happened or should

The suit culture



Suited surroundings!

Whenever I switch on my TV, I see our ministers, bureaucrats, and, for that matter who ever comes under the 'spotlight' are attired with suit and tie, no matter how much the outside temperature may be. At the same time when I look at the Indian leaders, they appear so simple in their attire, and so smart in their head! I feel frustrated as to think when shall we learn! So much so, even on October 28 when President Bush and Chinese Prime Minister were facing questions from the journalists, in Washington, President Bush had a jacket on only (no tie), and, the Chinese Minister wore his national dress i.e. the famous Mao Dze Dong (Mao Tse Tung) Coat.

In a country where 80% people live in subhuman conditions, does it justify for these people to spend so much money on such unproductive purpose i.e. on suit, tie and such?

I know that it is entirely one's own prerogatives to spend his own money the way one deem it fit, but, it hurts when the teaming millions who are our own brothers and sisters are living a life full of struggle. Little help from these people could change the life and conditions of the society in general slowly and gradually. Dear readers, please do not read me wrong, people must wear good clothes, befitting to the occasion and to make him presentable, but excessive of anything unglorifies the individual and the occasion.

Tayab-ul-Huq
Uttara, Dhaka

We look for treatments? We should try to look forward and slowly try to change the society needs, not by offending people's feelings, however!

Nayeem Arefin
Dhaka

I found the 'honest advice' given by ES (Oct. 26) rather inapt. According to the writer, people should deal with their concerns regarding the ill consequences of beauty pageants by simply not watching them. If ES is a Muslim, s/he must know that Islam is not just about doing the right thing yourself and ignoring the world around you. It is said that if a Muslim witnesses a wrongful act s/he should stop it if possible. If not, at least the act should be condemned verbally. If even that is not possible, a Muslim must abhor it in heart and that is the lowest level of faith.

There is no doubt that these pageants undermine some fundamental values of Islam and, as such, it is the obligation of a Muslim to point that out.

Even if we don't bring Islam into it, since the writers of the letters are concerned about what they sincerely believe to be the detrimental effect of such pageants on the dignity of women, surely it is their social responsibility to voice those concerns. How can these concerns be addressed by simply not watching the show on TV and thus avoiding the whole issue? Besides, ES must have realised that those letters were not judging the viewers, but the organisers and promoters of such shows.

FA
Dhaka

Does peace have half a chance?

Conventional wisdom saw perhaps too much in Bush campaign on the eve of US mid-term elections with his rhetoric on war on Iraq.

The fact is very few Americans worry about such external issues as war on Iraq. American public generally and traditionally not interested in rest of the world unless of course Americans feel threatened by an enemy. And it is here that George Bush wished to capitalise on post 9/11 rage and fear. But then Bush apparently lost the momentum. While White House and Pentagon are racking up war mongering, the American public seems to have lost some of its early penchant for war abroad and is beginning to worry more on jobs, economy, stocks, and some of the recent big time financial scandals. These are beginning to hurt their pocket book and shake their confidence. That being so, the US might be willing to compromise even if reluctantly on the up coming UN Security Council resolution on disarming Iraq. Yet, the spectre of war on Iraq remains very much alive. That is a reality few would reject with any conviction.

What is perhaps paradoxical to speculate is how the Arabs will react. The streets will chant and protest even louder than now, but if past is any guide, the governments will likely be grudgingly or with thinly disguised secrecy come on board calculating their long term interest once they are convinced of the inevitability of the situation and find

Saluting Tipu Sultan



It's a matter of great pride for our country that Tipu Sultan be honoured along with the ranks of Daniel Pearl at the International Press Freedom Awards.

I would have preferred to read the Prime Minister's letter of

California, USA

Don't the harass the innocent

In a meeting with formation commander, the PM has urged the army to be careful so that innocent people are not subjected to harassment during the army drive. The PM also advised the army top brass to exercise more caution so that no unfortunate incident takes place during the countrywide joint drive. The PM's recent oration that has been published in various newspapers proves that the PM is aware about some irregularities made by army.

Though army has done a remarkable job in improving law and order situation, they are alleged to use excessive force in some cases. As a whole, the army's performance is satisfactory especially they have gained a great success in recovering some sophisticated arms in Fatikchhari, a notorious crime zone in Chittagong.

In his recent visit in Sylhet, the Army

taken into custody must be taken seriously by the government and judiciously establish whether these extra-judicial killings (if one may say so) took place at the hands of the army or the police.

One is also surprised at the swiftness with which the army operation succeeded in nabbing culprits who have been wanted for long on many different charges. It is obvious that without the intelligence support of local police these successful arrests could not have been made. What then has been stopping the police from apprehending these culprits without the help of the army is a question that needs to be seriously answered. The immediate success of the army in unearthing the hideouts of the culprits is a pointer that once the army is withdrawn things would return to the previous state because the machinery that protected the criminals has merely been suspended not eliminated. What is required is a high powered and multi-represented

Towhid Hossain
Dhanmandi, Dhaka

"Operation Clean Heart" appreciated!

Praises go on from all corners for army crackdown. People of Bangladesh are breathing a sigh of sudden relief - "oh finally the mastans are gone". The media and intelligentsia are unanimously praising the army

year of their term in office. They called the army to look into this as a measure to curb crimes.

4. The police force is corrupt. The IGP should admit this and resign, setting an example.
5. I am with the Leader of Opposition and concerned about what happens when the army is withdrawn. However, I disagree with her when she says that the army was provided with a list to persecute the opposition.

We support the army as long as only the criminals jump from rooftops and die later, not an innocent one.

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"AL and terrorism in Bangladesh"

Never ever have I felt so shocked and let down to read your editorial on AL's comment on terrorism in Bangladesh.

Over the last few years through objective journalism, a very rare commodity in the trade, you have not only transformed yourself into a conscience of the nation but also became an institution in the area of neutral journalism. How could you take the side of religious fundamentalists (RF) in order to have a binge on Hasina bashing? Before taking the side of RF, very objectively, as you are used to do, you should have closed your eyes and looked back into the days of '60s and early '70s how socio-culturally liberated our good old Bangladesh was! And to our dismay and despair what is the situation now!

Do not shift your focus on to Hasina bashing. Hasina-Khaleda and cohorts are the outcome of what we have worked for to deserve. We have to work harder to deserve better Hasinas and Khaledas. Please come forward and take the right position against the forces of liberty and freedom- let's be proactive rather than reactive. We can NOT afford to wait for things to happen.

MC, Dhaka

This is in regards to the letter by Asma Khurshid Haque (November 4) on the editorial criticising Sheikh Hasina's irresponsible comments.

I don't think *The Daily Star* is taking a narrow view in criticising her. If you read the editorial, it points out the main issue that under present international circumstances and the United States paranoia, the last two words we want to hear together and Bangladesh and terrorism.

Almost all the odds for economic development are stacked against us. We don't need power hungry irresponsible politicians wandering about making more accusations and sowing the seeds of suspicion. Bangladesh is already in the books as the world's most corrupt country. We also came in the bottom on the world competitive survey.

I honestly doubt if we have active Taliban sympathisers. What we do have are masses of misinformed people. That should be dealt with, as should the activities of Islamic charities.

Asma mentioned a front-page report on the China Daily. She is right, it is the only Chinese national English paper. Reading it, one recalls the old Pravda from the USSR days. It is nothing more than the mouthpiece of a dictatorial regime.

Masood Rana, Dhaka

Your editorial on Awami League and terrorism in Bangladesh makes interesting reading. We read the websites of all the Eng-

lish and Bengali newspapers of Bangladesh, every day, 7 days a week. Millions of us who are outside the country meet millions of others from countries all over the world. Did you really believe that the international community is unaware of human rights violations in Bangladesh? Their bombing of cultural and religious festivals, including the Bengali New Year festival at Ramna, is known to everybody.

Every one all over the world knows the recent arrest of Sheikh Selim, Saber Hossein Chowdhury, Talukder Abdul Khaleque. These men are most respected people in the country. People obviously ask why the army has gone for them instead of the known criminals and terrorists.

Sheikh Hasina did the right thing when she told members of the European Parliament that the people of Bangladesh are against such actions. It is Sheikh Hessian's duty as a leader to stand by the innocent people and expose those who are committing these crimes to the people of Bangladesh and the people of the world.

Mr. Sultan Mahmud Shariff, London

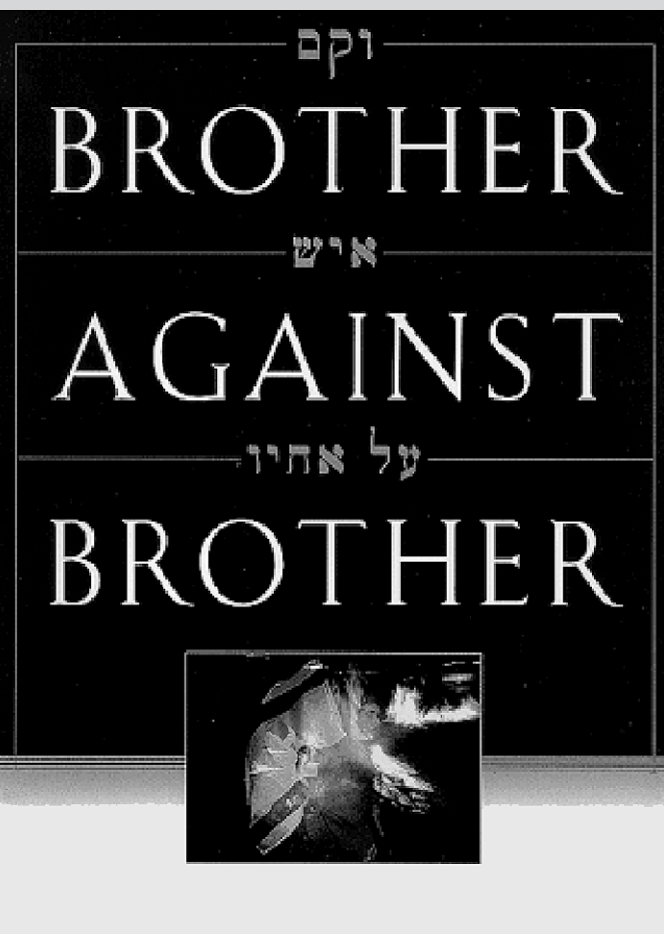
Your editorial raising objection to the recent speech by the Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina is commendable. We as a nation must understand that speaking ill about our country to outsiders is not something to be proud of. If the country is in the pits it is due to the failure of each and every one of us. You can't shrug responsibility by 'passing the buck'.

The recent articles in international print media are yet to be substantiated by documents of proof. If our political leaders try to add fuel to that fire we as a nation loose out too much and will be betrayal to the people, who in reality God fearing, but far from being religious zealots or fanatics.

Historically and socially we have been tolerant and believe in religious cohabiting, therefore trying to label us as a 'terrorist nation' will be unfair by the international media leave alone our own political or human rights leaders. We have a lot more serious problems that need to be dealt with and only by all of us working together can we solve such problems. Can't we be Pro-Bangladeshi (please no controversy on this word defining as politically motivated) for a change?

Akku Chowdhury, Banani, Dhaka

We were shocked to find a series of news items published in the FEER, New York Times and in some Indian newspaper about harbouring terrorists/ Talibans in Bangladesh. But, we the non-political expatriates are trying to portray our country as one of the very few Muslim countries with democratic norms and more



Extremism unaccepted

secular public views about culture and religion. We believe we are correct when we say Bangladeshis are more tolerant and secular than many of the so-called "large democracies".

May good sense prevail on our Leader of the Opposition! Please tell her to have patience and to respect the popular verdict.

A.K Chowhan, Canada