The Daily Star

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.

TO THE EDITOR

"AL and terrorism in Bangladesh"

It seems that the campaign by Sheikh Hasina and AL to portray Bangladesh as a hotbed of terrorism and fundamentalism is succeeding to some extent as evidenced by the occasional reports published in the international media and the PhD researches reportedly initiated in some foreign universities on this issue

However the same people who would like to take these foreign reports at their face value would not accept the views of the international observers that the last general election that brought the BNP-led alliance to power was a fair one nor would they accept the views of the diplomatic community in Dhaka about Bangladesh being a moderate Muslim country. How absurd it is that the reports by foreign journalists based on their flying week-long visits are more acceptable to these people than that of the diplomatic community living close to ground zero and assessing the local situation day in and day out. It is sad to note how biased we become as a result of our polarising partisan politics

I find it sad also that a member of the faculty of a US university (Dr. Zaman, November 4) would mix up the issue of violation of human rights during the current army campaign (which you had forcefully and rightly condemned) with your criticism (again rightly done) of Sheikh Hasina for her recent speech before a foreign audience denigrating the last general election and for depicting Bangladesh as possible host of terrorist network. It is true that even if Sheikh Hasina had made the same speech in Bangladesh, it would have reached the global audience given the state

Death of Kala Faruq

columnists and editorial-writers (of whom we have plenty at home and abroad) who cannot find anything wrong with the AL and nothing good with the BNP. I would like to commend you for your missionary zeal to speak for truth and justice without worrving whether it pleases or displeases the recipient. Please keep up the good work. A.B.M. Nurul Islam Gulshan, Dhaka

Most of the points I wanted to make after reading Dr. Zaman's letter have been made by other readers. I don't understand why Dr. Zaman and his friends were embarrassed when "learned" scholars in his faculty were critical because the army was called in to assist civil administration in Bangladesh that unfortunately resulted in some deaths. In USA where Dr. Zaman now lives comfortably, the paramilitary like the National Guards is often called to assist local police in law and order cases. He and his friends may also feel less embarrassed to face his learned friends who criticise Bangladesh for reasons of human rights violations if they ask them to focus instead on the measures being taken in the USA by the Government to discrimi-

nate against its own citizens of Arab origin following the 9/11 incidents. The criticisms of the army drive in Bangladesh are nevertheless well taken and every one in Bangladesh, where we have a healthy democ-

racy functioning with the press freedom the best as compared to any other country, are talking and discussing freely about the pros and cons of the army action. Dr. Zaman may not know, the papers in Bangladesh are reporting on the negative side of the army drive the Prime Minister and the Government in

Bangladesh also share those

cyclones, etc. Yet after all these, we have shown the world that we are capable of changing governments freely and fairly; guaranteed press freedom; and giving the people a genuine hope of a better future as indicated by the positive indicators of social and economic growth in our country. With this army drive, we will, I hope, set another example of using the armed forces for a civil cause and then send the armed forces back to where they belong. Shahiahan Ahmed

Dhanmandi, Dhaka

Mahmud Shariff (November 6).

Why do we have to always side

with a political party's view? Isn't it

pretty obvious that internal matters

of a country need to be dealt within

the borders of the country, instead

of marketing it as a political tool to

gain others sympathy? What has

our respected Leader of the Oppo-

sition gained by further distorting

our country's image to the Western

world? Is being in the 'Hot Seat', so

important, that one is willing to sell

his/her ethics and morals, some-

thing we all stood up for at our time

tion realise how her irresponsible

comments affect all Bangladeshi

students as well as other

Mr. Sharif regarding exposing the

sufferings of the innocent people

have you once seen our neighbour-

ing country India's. leaders of the

opposition running to the foreign

press and the foreign community for

development in Bangladesh is its

narrow minded power hungry

politicians. I do not mean any disre-

The main reason for such a slow

As far as the comment made by

Bangladeshis living abroad?

Does the Leader of the Opposi-

of independence?

hardly remember any leader of a foreign country speaking about internal ills in a foreign land. Though it is late but the leader of the opposition should change herself and spoke cautiously both inland and abroad. We the Bangladeshi students really fall in an embarrassing situation when we find our politicians talking like that. It is very surprising that being an

students of Bangladesh. I can

ex-Prime Minister she could talk like that in Brussels. Anyway, it would be better for both our country and Awami League as well if she talked I could not believe my eyes after with more responsibility reading the letter by Mr. Sultan Akter Mahmud

Stockholm, Sweden

Louis I. Kahn's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar

I appreciate the letters written by architects Mr. Kashef Mahboob Chowdhury and Mr. Jalal Ahmed (November 04) expressing their concern over the Government's plan to build Speaker's and Deputy Speaker's house within the precincts of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. I must also congratulate The Daily Star, Paribesh Andolon, and Prothom Alo for bringing the matter into public attention.

The present set of bureaucrats, engineers and architects of government works department are perhaps not aware of the significance and the international acclaim Shere-Bangla Nagar received as an architectural masterpiece of late Louis I. Kahn

Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, once known as the Second Capital.

Louis Kahn's architectural work of the Parliament building complex with lakes and red brick houses of unique design is considered as an architectural masterpiece. In 1980 at the British Council I was amazed and proud to see the coverage of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar complex in an international architectural directory as one of the architectural feat of 20th century. TIME magazine also gave coverage of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar complex in their art section with coloured photographs while appreciating the work of Louis

It is a pity that we as a nation fail to appreciate great people and their contribution to Bangladesh. Any sensible government would have placed a plaque at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar honouring the great work of late Louis I. Kahn. On the contrary the influential law makers and their sycophants in public works department are out to destroy Sher-e-Bangla Nagar after finishing off Dhanmandi, Gulshan, Banani, etc. Talking about saving landmarks as national heritage, do our leaders know what is heritage or do they have any?

Ziauddin Ahmed Dhaka

Gulf War II!

doing wrong?"

now study to understand our reli-

gion and parents try to send their

children to weekend Islamic

classes. Moreover, now many young women do not hesitate to

wear hijab to portray themselves as

proud Muslims. It is certainly a

paradox that through these wars,

the West has managed to raise the

awareness of Muslims as opposed

We welcome the move by the army

to nab criminals but we don't wel-

come the extra-judicial heart

attacks. People in Latin America

also cheered the initial arrival of the

military in the civilian scene in the

What about Islami

Chatra Shibir?

to subjugating them.

Shukla Mirza

Qatar

George Harrison

In 1971 Bangladesh had a very few friends in the West who were concerned enough or knew enough to do something to support the cause of Bangladesh. Among these few were George Harrison, an ex-Beatle who learned about the struggle form his friend and teacher Pundit Ravi Shankar. Harrison was a humanitarian and that is why eastern philosophy appealed to him. There were a lot of people who just joined the movements in the '60s and '70s to be fashionable while people like George Harrison actually were serious about their humanitarian commitments.

That is why when Bangladesh was just an obscure name in the West and a dream to the freedom loving people of Bangladesh George Harrison came through for us. He arranged for a benefit concert for Bangladesh. He gathered all his friends and colleagues to perform for this event. This was an unprecedented event. This gave Bangladesh and the cause of Bangladesh wide exposure in addition to the financial help from the concert profits. The concert raised more than 2 million dollars for UNICEF aid of Bangladesh. Stars like Eric Clapton, Bob Dylan and Ringo Star, Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, Ustad Alla Rakha and Pundit Ravi Shankar performed at the concert.

We want to see something like naming of a city street or some form of memorial to remind us about the contributions of this singer songwriter who wrote the song 'Bangladesh' to help and inspire a nation.

This November is the first anniversary of the Humanitarian's untimely demise. We, Bangladeshis owe it to the world to recognise the contribution of a friend in need.

St. SE, Glenwood, MN

Snap polls?

Sheikh Hasina in a recent public meeting declared, "Public opinion is now against the government." and "I want immediate elections. It's now a public demand and the people would press it home in due time".

Will the Leader of the Opposition please tell us a credible source of her findings? If she is using some form of statistical analysis, then please elaborate on the basis and theory behind inferencing such statements.

California, USA

This is regarding the letter by Tayabto attend ASIAN summit during the

"The WAR-ther

..and finally, the weather! The political atmosphere of Israel is now looking foggy and misty. It is increasingly moving towards the ultra-right region, as recently being joined by the war criminal Shaul Mofaz as Defence Minister. The desperate opportunist Benyamin Netanyahu is making his career move at lightning speed and taking The Gulf War changed many things the flag of Foreign Minister. and opened a new vista to look at Mixing all up with the thunder the western world, as well as a support of Uncle Sam and billions of means to scrutinise our own activi-US taxpayers' money dropping in Sharon's pocket like hailstones, the Many Muslims woke up from their forecast doesn't look too friendly for slumber of servility and complathe poor Palestinians! The heavy cence from the ashes of the Gulf build-up of army-cloud with British War, Bosnian War, Chechen War, tornadoes near the Iraqi region is AfghanWar... a resounding queslikely to burst out with intense mistion baffled everyone "what are we sile-storm. No doubt the temperature will be reaching several 100 During the 80's I never saw degrees centigrade and so our local anyone in Canada, the United boys, chilling-out inside their Royal States, or Australia praying their tents need to watch out and drive Salah (namaj) in any Bengali party, carefully throughout this slippery at home, or elsewhere; we just used season. The last defence held by Mr to dress-up beautifully, converse Putin has been washed by the with the guests and eat to our fill. Moscow theatre siege! The wind will But things have changed for many be blowing pretty fast from all direcof us since the Gulf War. Now men tion and survivability will be severely pray in congregation every time we have a party; women also pray. We reduced.

DHAKA FRIDAY NOVEMBER 8, 2002

Remembering a friend

Lufthansa German Airlines; I have travelled many countries in the five continents but have never found these kind of behaviour in any airport in the world except Kolkata. I urge to international airlines operating in Bangladesh-- please The government has launched army to deal and improve the law allocate your airline staff instead of airport staff at check-in and order situation in Bangladesh, May Allah bless the people of our

country. Shaheen

Death in army cus-

Firstly I would like to thank the Prime patriotic organisation in the country) the opportunity to free the ordinary people from the hands of criminals. make life horrible at the airport the column of 25th October "It sometimes due to their naked (Operation Clean Heart) has also brought us a sense of relief that is I travel a lot for my official work comparable to that of the people and consultancy across the world. I when liberating forces enter occudo not know about other passenpied territories." Unfortunately there are cases when some criminals (as per media report most of these people had severe crime records)

gers but I was harassed many times at the ZIA unnecessarily at the check in, immigration and customs and really felt guilty myself for being died in the army custody during the interrogation. Interrogation is not an If my luggage is over weighted, easy process. These criminals are staff at check-in offers to make it not ready to divulge the information okay by paving him half (negotiawhen interrogated in a soft voice. To ble!) of the airlines charge. If I bring crack these hardened criminals any taxable item from anywhere. rough and tough interrogation people in custom are unhappy and process is inevitable. That is why an

developed countries during interrogation, such deaths in developing countries are not unusual. Our officers and soldiers are truly

patriot. Any task assigned to them they perform to the best of their abilities. Asrayan project (Building houses for poor people in remote places), flood duties, traffic control to name a few. Now they are determined to crack down on criminals who created reigns of terror in our beloved motherland.

For the sake of greater interest, we must be ready to sacrifice. We must be ready to sacrifice few criminals' life for the safety of the millions of ordinary people. If my brother had been a criminal I would be the first person to accept this sacrifice. Nowadays many parents are proud of their criminal sons. We must aet rid of these new trends.

So please don't shed any more crocodile tears for these criminals These criminals disgraced the concept of human rights. Thousands innocents died at the hands of these criminals, hundreds of young girls were raped, business communities were forced to pay illegal toll. Won't we be happy if hundred criminals die at the expense of peace in the country? I request all the media to go for opinion poll about these deaths. Major Khalid Moinuddin (retired)

Where is war on terror heading?

The US declared its "War on terror "

washed away human emotion from my heart? the death of Kala Faruq. It is sure, our past and present experience

nous activities again in full swing. What a society we are living in!

This is going to have several ramifications. A criminal of such magnitude like Kala Faruq, First, what little co-operation there was can't pass unnoticed all the way to the aircraft between the police and the army during this but with silent backing of the administration drive is now certain to be scrapped. No army and the police. My hats off to the gentleman of this untouchable who mastaan. Unfortunately such gallantry acts end up in only cutting a small branch of the terrorist circle as searching the roots might have been devastating for many high-ups. We have questions to ask before we forget everything; why did Foreign Ministry recommended issuance of visa to Kala Faruq? Who signed the letter and on what application? Why did police not involve the army while interrogation and subsequent raids to recover arms of the incumbent? What the organiser including the arrested Director (production) of Channel-i has to comment on inclusion of this person in the list of cultural group? What does the post mortem report say? How did he die being shot at a leg? If his death relates reasonably with earlier 'torture during interrogation', how come he run to flee from police custody? These are the mysteries, not the death of Kala Faruq. I salute the Prime Minister for her strong and personal initiative in engaging army to uproot terrorism after police failed to act affirmatively even within one year to uphold her election vow. Some acts of the army though questionable and future after their return to barracks are yet to be ascertained, certainly the "Operation Clean Heart" has already won hearts of millions as it has so far been above usual partisan ones. If you can start 'Operation Clean Heart', Prime Minister, I am sure you can do even better by investigating this shameful act. Asif Akram. Canada

It would be proper for me to condemn the death under police custody. What a sorrow that I could not do so! I would like to know how the other readers of The Daily Star have taken

solutions?

make us believe so, if Kala Faruq were not dead, he would get bail and started his hei-

After hearing of the death news of Kala Faruq while trying to escape police custody, I could not help but remember the saying "What goes

Kahn.

Faruque Hasan, Dhanmandi, Dhaka

around, comes around". Rozan, Dhaka

Saeed Khan

Around 1974-75 Louis Kahn had visited few times to oversee the work going on for completion of

AA

but is the army doing the job in an appropriate manner? Why people are dying while in custody? No matter what measure the govern-

"The Suit Culture"

ul-Hug (November 6), I understand and totally agree with the point you are making. But, just curious, are you referring to Mr. Jiang Zemin? If yes, he is the President of the Peoples' Republic of China. Chinese Prime Minister Mr. Zhu was probably visiting Phnom Penh, Cambodia

time you mentioned. Sohel Singapore

forecast"

ment adopts the thorough cleansing of the whole system is needed instead of "Operation Clean Heart". Waheeda Alam Toronto, Canada **Corruption and** harassment at the ZIA

approach for money.

a Bangladeshi national

Osman Siddiq

New York, USA

Operation

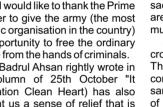
Clean Heart"

This is very unfortunate that a few (or could be many) of airport staff

tody

Bangkok

I would like to write few things about the death in army custody during ongoing "Operation Clean Heart". Minister to give the army (the most Mr. Badrul Ahsan rightly wrote in



l trust police i ce or hand ovei another suspect to the police without first interrogating him themselves. Naturally they will act upon that information, so we'll soon see the army trying to arrest policemen. Second, this has further discredited our police again showing them as a corrupt, under-trained, demoralised bunch. Discrediting the police will only strengthen the army's hand in further operations and make them even more independent from any modicum of civil control or oversight. The police will now naturally try to discredit the army in turn to counter this imbalance, so we can look forward to more revelations of army abuses.

I don't think there is anyone in this country who

doesn't realise why Kala Faruq was killed

'while he tried to escape'.

In sum, this murder has chipped away another block in the foundation of our democracy.

* * *

Joyonto, Dhaka

This is in continuation of my letter "Kala Faruq arrested" (November 6). Unfortunately, my fear has come true. Kala Faruq is dead. Why? Is it for fear of the truth? How many cats would have come out of the bag had he been in the custodv? Wahid Shafi, Dhaka

The Daily Star has published the news on the death of Kala Faruq in such a way that it seemed to me, the readers should feel pang in their hearts for his unnatural death,

To be honest, I have not felt sorrow, for the death of a notorious criminal like him. Have I lost human quality? What have made me lost human quality? Is not it the situation in the country created by the terrorists, which has

of current communication technology, but people do have the intelligence to understand what is meant for local public consumption as part of narrow party politics and what is meant for an international audience.

If the bomb blasts and supposed attempts of the life of Sheikh Hasina are evidences of rise of fundamentalism in Bangladesh, one might ask why not a single case was solved during the AL rule and the culprits brought to book? Don't blame our much-maligned police and detective branch for these lapses. They have shown in many a case that, if not interfered with, they can and do solve some crimes quickly as evidenced by the recent school teacher Swapan Goswami murder case.

Some of the writers have accused you trying to do a balancing act of pleasing AL and BNP alternately. Obviously, they would like you to behave like the Awami

criticisms and are taking due note of

The other points that Dr. Zaman and his embarrassed colleagues do not know are that the army drive was undertaken with considerable public support; that this drive is nonpolitical as vindicated by the large number of BNP supporters who have been held in the drive; and that this drive was necessitated because of many years of a political culture of using "maastaans" for political ends that all political parties including the Awami League have patronised, a culture that the Prime

Minister is now trying to end. The following points I guess could help people like Dr. Zaman feel less embarrassed about their country. Bangladesh is the only country that had to come out of twodecolonisation process in 25 years and the second one in 1971 was utterly destructive and then there are our more than due shares of natural calamities such as floods,

spect but one wonders whether these individuals join politics for country's interest or personal gain? To make things worse, we find a certain quarter of the supporters blindly fall into the web of party

policies without even analysing its affect in reality. Shahzeb Shahnawaz

Univ of Michigan, USA

Stop embarrassing us

Being a responsible person we armed law keepers. should utter words and behave likely. Sheikh Hasina should be And why should we pay taxes to more practical and responsible maintain the police who according when delivering her speech. How could she ruin the image of Banglato all views is only useful for collectdesh saying that the present govina bribes? ernment is helping the growth of fundamentalism? 'Fundamentalaspect of the matter. How come ism' this word is a very sensitive and Jamaat and Shibir cadres are left catchy these days. Nowadays, virtually alone when BNP and AL especially in the foreign countries, are being taken in? this sort of speech has a great Munna Murshed impact on the immigrant and the Dhanmandi, Dhaka

Just before we go, today's main stories again...! Azad Miah

Oldham, UK

"Miss Photogenic"

I refer to the letters "Miss Photogenic". All I wish to say is, no matter how deeply propagandised we may be by the West on our treatment of women, is there an equivalent of "Maa" (mother) in the so-called free world-- the concept of reverence that goes with this word in our society?

That paradise lies under the feet of a woman (mother)! Let us be what we are with sincere belief and action and stop copying worthless values of a system that is set for doom

M. Anis Motiwala On e-mail

'60s and '70s but later deeply regretted it as many disappeared. The It would seem that as a society, social wounds never healed. Lowwe've become adept at taking those ering human rights standard may articles from foreign cultures that ultimately affect the very people promote social decline, and ignorwho are now happy at the sight of ing those that would bring any social development. Those who laud Suppose the crime rate does not these 'beauty pageants' should fall? How long will the army be in? keep in mind that for the most part, these programmes are created by men, managed and directed by men, and are produced for the entertainment of men. Somewhere But there is already a puzzling in all this, some believe it is the women who are being liberated.

Perhaps, as a male, I should be the last person complaining, but I can't help but notice the irony of the position.

do late service since I do not pay them instead of the government. Sometimes, immigration people ask something, which is really insulting, and they are not supposed to ask those kinds of questions.

I am a frequent traveller of

Army-wise!

with much fanfare. After one year is open secret that he will be torthat war is characterised by two tured if required. We are a poor nation. We don't have sophisticated instrument like lie detectors etc.

verted into conviction; arrests, interrogation, incarceration, are uncommonly frequent with no holds barred. If mere suspicion and speculative future intent were enough to arrest and prosecution, then we must be living in a very different world. Phrases like " Islamists"," Islaimic terrorists", "Islamic Extremists" and more are now routine. What is not routine in the world media and summit communiqués is any reference to the dictum that even "terrorists" have some legal and human rights. Under the cloak of "War on terror", States are either pursuing extra legal methods to fight ethnic, linguistic, and rebel groups seeking separation, secession, or independence. All of this is a

prescription for chaos and destabilisation or disequilibrium in the States that are delicately poised though chronically troubled.

Secondly, almost by design, the "War on terror" has transformed into war on Iraq, and by extension war on the Arab and Muslim bloc. Iraq never figured as having anything to do with September 11 attack; no link was established even after energetic efforts by the US intelligence establishment. Yet, after Afghanistan, Iraq has been a target. Iraq "may have" developed weapons could give weapons to terrorists groups in future, may make a nuclear bomb if it gets the materials - all these speculations and insinuations do not sell and appears mere hogwash or utter crap, and that too coming from responsible world statesmen

Thses are ominous signs. The Islamic world can ignore and remain complacent only at their peril. Muslim states must steadfastly and resolutely resist being put on the defensive; rather it is time for the Arab and Muslim world to close ranks to fight the menace posed by this twist on the "War on terror".

Those who spawn "terrorism" and much maligned " suicide bombing" by their ruthless oppression and crimes must share responsibility as well as consequences. They must not be allowed to put the onus on others to fight their war while they escape scrutiny and cost. Hussain Dhaka

1. I would like to ask the readers who are writing that it's okay to make some "sacrifice" in the greater interest of the country- are you ready to die in this manner yourself or would you accept if your own brother or son meets with such a fate?

Well, I am not suggesting that you belong to the criminal sort, but such can be the case if you do not go through the proper judicial process and all parties are not allowed to speak out, that one of your enemies can just drop a false complaint and take a personal revenge!

2. If the deaths in the hands of Army/Police are taken to be a form of "judgement" then what happens to the godfathers? It will not take long to create another batch of Frankensteins by the political bigwigs- so, what's the use of even "killing" some hoodlums if the men behind the curtains remain unscathed?

In some instances it is being alleged that taking this opportunity of Army crackdown, a particular criminal person is being victimised because he "knew too much"- thus saving the "boss". And to think the person thus "killed" could be an important witness for few other cases to implicate some more rogues A Distressed Observer Chittagong

accused is placed under remand; it While no one dies in custody in

significant trends. One: mere suspicion is con-

