

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.

**Krishnachura in spring?**

While going through the February 18 issue of *The Daily Star*, I was aghast to see a beautiful photo of *Krishnachura* in the back page with a note that the tree has been in bloom (from February 17!) in the Sangsad Bhaban area implying the arrival of *Phalgun*. I need not go to the Sangsad Bhaban area to verify that the picture is not authentic and the statement is TOTALLY FALSE. *Krishnachura* NEVER blooms in *Phalgun* (spring) but is at its best in *Baishakh* (summer). The two flaming red flowers which do bloom in spring, however, are *Shimul* and *Palash*. A newspaper like *The Daily Star* is taken in high esteem and any kind of sensationalism or gimmick, if proven incorrect, can tarnish the credibility of the newspaper. **Shaukat Islam Dhaka** See Editor's note on Page 12.

**"Why Eid Mubarrak?"**

I would like to respond to Mr. Khalid Rahman's letter with a question. Do you greet people on the phone with an English "Hello" or with a Bangla translation of the word? If you use the English "Hello" than I would suggest that you change your habit first and then bring up the issue of using Arabic in conveying Eid greetings. Please don't get me wrong, I am not trying to say that you were wrong in making the argument, but, given the problems we Muslims are going through these days, it will be really unfortunate if we create an unnecessary rift over a simple thing like greeting people. We don't have to be politically correct in all aspects of our lives, after all it is the thought that counts not the words that has been used to convey it. **Anwar Babar Dallas, TX, USA**

This is in response to Khalid Rahman's letter regarding Eid Mubarak. I don't see any problems with greeting people in one's mother tongue during Eid. As long as the greeting is sincere the language itself doesn't matter. But Mr Rahman is wrong when he says that "it is clearly stated that it does not matter in which language we pray to the almighty Allah but with what intentions do we pray". Intention is of utmost importance but Muslims can only say their prayers in the designated language which is Arabic. One can say the *munazaat* in Bengali because the prayer itself ends before the *munazaat*.

I cannot help asking why this sudden interest in changing Arabic greetings used by Muslims all over the world to Bengali (or any other language for that matter). We are after all Muslims and very proud of our Islamic identity. I have often heard non-Muslim Bangladeshis (and non Bangladeshis too) greeting Muslims with Assalamu Alaikum although they do not (usually) use the other words and expressions. Yes, we are Bangladeshi and very proud of our cultural heritage. That is why we speak in Bangla, wear sarees (on formal occasions at least), relish 'Ilish macchi' (Hilsha fish) and love Bangla literature. We respect all religions. But we do not need to shy away from our Islamic identity. **F Hussain UK**

I highly appreciate Mr Khalid's love for Bangla language and patriotism but there are lots of words we use which are not really Bangla but widely understood and accepted. The word "Mubarak" is a very old word of greetings used in so many auspicious occasions in the Bengali Muslim Society. But if Mr Khalid can introduce a synonymous of this word would be nice but it will take time and effort.

A language becomes rich when it has foreign words into its stock and almost all the major languages of the world uses many words from so many different languages. On the question of nationalistic feelings and religion, we have some sensitive issues there. There are people who think that they are Bengalis first and then Muslims. And there others who think the otherwise. These views will persist till we start feeling proud of being Bangali rather than Muslims. **Akbar Hussain Toronto, Canada**

**"Push-in"**

This refers to the various letters published in this column on the

**World Cup Cricket: Bangladesh's poor performance**

I am making a humble request to BCB to kindly relieve my poor motherland from repetitive and almost perpetual humiliation in the name of playing cricket. The country is already burdened with so many broken dreams that it dares not to dream any more. Please try to understand "what is sports to you is insult to Bangladesh!" The best and honourable thing would be a voluntary withdrawal from Test status. We will rather live in the background as a cricket-loving nation without being a laughing stock to the inter-

**Tigers caged by Canada**

**AL-AMIN from Kingsmead** ing Canada a ball better than any famous first victory of the Bangladesh in one-day internationals, that too against a Test side. The panic-button was pressed the moment Bangladesh began to chase the modest target under lights and succumbed to a defeat which seemed impossible just hours earlier. The slide started when in-form opener

national sports arena. **M. Ayub Khan, Ottawa, Canada**

What more can we expect from such an inexperienced team in this level of game! We need fresh blood in our team but that doesn't mean that we need to replace all the experienced ones. Look at our batting line-up. If there were Bulbul, Akram, Nannu (at least one of them) in the team, the situation wouldn't have been that bad.

Just think about Akram's performance in Bangladesh-Holland match in the ICC trophy and how Nannu played in the last world cup.

Look at Kenya! Virtually they have the same team for the last 10/12 years. I don't think it will be a problem for Kenya to beat Bangladesh in this tournament.

Moreover, we need to select those people in BCB who know about cricket.

Anyway, good luck for poor Bangladesh Team for the rest of the tournament. **Zahir, Kansas City, USA**

The joy of Eid-ul-Azha was shattered by the agony of defeat of our cricket team in the first match of Cricket World Cup-2003.

The comprehensive defeat to dark horse Canada is an unexpected upset in the world cup-2003. I have watched the match ball to ball. There was marked difference in bowling and batting of our players. They were good in bowling and fielding, and displayed their skill and worth in this sector. But they looked different and perplexed while batting. They lacked concentration and determination to hang onto the wicket for 50 overs. They were thoughtless, reckless and extravagant in shot selection. They

were unnecessarily in hurry and forgot that the innings is of 50 overs. So, they squeezed the innings in 22 overs and 120 runs thus embracing humiliating defeat.

Our cricketers repeated the same mistakes while playing against Sri Lanka. Their batings proved that they have learned nothing from their past mistakes. As one commentator commented, "Bangladeshi cricketers are refusing to learn from their mistakes." They bundled up the innings in 31 overs scoring 124 runs. In this match bowling was unimpressive too.

Bangladesh's One-day international cricket debut was in 1997 and the nation was crowned with Test status in 2000. Since then it has played 63 One-day international and 17 Tests. It has won three One-day and no Test match. Statistics reflects poor show. Deteriorating performance may compel ICC to reconsider whether Bangladesh be allowed to retain Test crown.

We do excess when we achieve something in sports in international arena. Recently the whole nation went mad when our football team won the SAF football tournament. Jubilation, exultation and celebration crossed all limit. The national dailies adored the players with all available decorations. They were over-acting in their admiration. We forgot what we achieved and at what level. Bangladesh defeated the Maldives of 298 square kilometre in size having around 300,000 population. Moreover, the standard of football in South Asia is at the lowest of the Asian standard. **Col. Sharif Habibur Rahman, psc (Retd), Maghbazar, Dhaka**

Bangladesh Makes it into the Guinness Book of Records for assisting Sri Lanka attain three Golden Ducks with the first three bowls of the game. Keep up the good work guys! **Abdul M. Ismail, Liverpool, US**

Can we blame American or Indian conspiracy for the poor show of Bangladesh **Cricket Team in the World Cup! Mushtaq Ahmad, Telford, UK**

I do not know how this will sound to others but my special thanks goes to the Canadian Cricket Team for their pre-eminent performance against Bangladesh. They have shown keen determination in their game and that's exactly what our boys lacked. I expected a lot from our boys but once again they have let us down.

I don't know whether they will be looking for a pretext this time as well. But, I am sorry to say that the way we keep on losing matches to every team by huge margins, this is just the prelude to more serious problems to our cricket. **Minhaj Ahmed, Uttara, Dhaka**

We strongly suggest that the Ministry of Sports call back the Bangladesh Cricket Team from the World Cup Tournament. This will save the country from further humiliation. **Kutub Uddin Ahmed, Old Airport Road, Dhaka**

Cricket is the one and only game in which Bangladesh has reached a world class standard. Well at least on papers we are one of the ten Test playing nations. Unfortunately since we have been bestowed with the Test status, our performance deteriorated.

Every one of us hoped that well at least in the World Cup, the biggest cricketing event our so-called tigers will give their best shot and make our nation proud. That didn't happen and we have

lost to a nation like Canada, the last team to qualify for the World Cup. All eleven players of Canada were making their one-day international debut and they never played under daylight. According to our captain it was an accident. If we take the statement seriously then it must be said that the game against Sri Lanka must have been suicide.

It is very clear that our players lack basic cricketing knowledge. They even tried to play expensive shots when we were four down! What else can we say about our team which even does not have the ability to play the full quota of overs? Something needs to be done very quickly to change our approach and aim small goals at a time. These days we are playing completely unplanned cricket and if something is not done immediately I am sure it won't be long before our Test status were scrapped. **SR Zaman, Dhaka**

When Bangladesh won the Test status, I was abroad earning my living. I was overjoyed by the news as I, like million others dreamed that one day Bangladesh would be playing against the Test playing nations, would one day be the champion of the cham-

**Vaas grabs historic hat-trick**

**Lanka lash Bangladesh** **AL-AMIN, from Pietermaritzburg** the 50-over contest. Vaas' opening burst left his team only to chase 125 for victory, which they did with more than half the overs to spare. The experienced left-arm paceman snapped up the third hat-trick in the history of World Cup. What was extraordinary

paceman Chetan Sharma (1987) in the elite group. Vaas, who hold the world record of best bowling figures in one-day internationals (8-19 against Zimbabwe), eventually helped himself to 6-25 as Bangladesh, sent into bat, were bowled out for 124 in

piens. I was also happy to see Gordon Greenidge (GG) coaching our team and was pleased to know that he was the architect of our team's achievement.

Then came the news of dismissal of GG from BCB! I also learnt that the way he was dismissed was humiliating and felt ashamed of the way BCB had behaved with him. Now after all these years, it is evident that GG was the best coach we ever had and he is the only coach who could bring out the tigers from the cats. BCB authorities and others might not have the guts to accept this conclusion but I as a selfish (not selfless because everyone claims to be selfless) supporter do accept it and apologise to GG.

It is now no use to cry over spill milk. What we should now request the I.C.C. to take back our Test status and let us play against teams like the university team that had come just before the World Cup to play with our local teams and/or to let us play with the local teams of other countries. This should be done for the sake of safe guarding whatever respect we have left and before the I.C.C. wakes up and decides on its own to strip us from our Test status. **Sohel Haque On e-mail**

Bangladesh needs to be examined. **Azad Dhaka**

**Better links to ZIA**

Plan to improve infrastructural facilities centering ZIA international airport is a timely and welcome step. I request all concerned to note the following: 1. Improving roads, beautification of the area, structural changes will all be futile if substantial improvement is not brought about in the management of the airport. This is central to the problem. 2. Expanding four-lane each way road, linking the city to airport requires further study. All links to this highway will have funnel effect being narrow. In this case the basic objective will not be achieved. 3. Considering future requirements, the authorities must keep in mind that a mass transit system like rail/shuttle service will have to be incorporated in the plan. All leading cities are feeling this necessity and adjusting their requirement now. 4. Please avoid artificial beautification. These are costly, requires maintenance and our people are still not acquainted with them. Besides a stretch of land may be decorated which will not give a contrasting appearance with rest of the surroundings. Instead we may keep the area very clean and arrange it naturally. Outsiders will definitely appreciate our endeavor. Airport must be linked by different approaches. Single road linking Main City will never serve

'push-in' issue. As an Indian who has lived in Dhaka I can understand the intensity of feeling that this topic generates there. But it is naive to believe that there are 'no illegal Bangladeshi immigrants in India'. I have personally come across boys from Sylhet working in a popular auditorium in Mumbai as parking attendants (and as claimed by themselves, there are 20-25 of them from Sylhet working there). The fact is that there are scores of such 'immigrants' from Bangladesh who reside in other cities in India.

There is also truth in the argument that the Indian Govt is raising the ante on the 'deportation' issue for political gains. I agree with your reader Awrup Sanyal's ("Push-in", February 15) comment that the majority of Indians can see through this game (or so we hope!).

But rigid stances taken by both the Govt's is only serving narrow political gains. **Lakshminpathy Bhat Mumbai, India**

**"Bangladesh Cricket Team - golfing talent?"**

Brilliant idea from Mr. Aminur Rahman regarding turning our national cricketers into golfing heroes ("Bangladesh Cricket Team - golfing talent?", February 18). But the truth is NOT ALL - as Mr. Rahman writes - our batsmen keep their feet firmly in place while making strokes.

Mr. Rahman, with his golfing background, must be witnessing - day in day out - that many of our *deshi* golfers perform 'Bharat Nattayam' type dance steps (forgetting the basic rules) while going through their shots like some of our cricketers.

So what is so special about transforming our cricketers into golfers? Innovate new dance steps? **Ashfaq Chowdhury Banani, Dhaka**

**"Islamic militants planned to bomb concert"**

The news-item "Islamic militants planned to bomb concert" (February 18) attracted my attention. Coupled with the

news headline "Delhi watches Dhaka's step on its security concerns" (February 18) I could not but become seriously concerned.

As a conscious reader who cares to follow the emerging socio-political polarisation of Bangladesh society, one is most likely to read between the lines and link the two reports as complementary to one another. First the push-ins and now this. I am afraid they all tell a story, a story full of cardinal failures of the present government both in its foreign policy and its inability to uphold the secular image of Bangladesh.

We are passing through dangerous times. We should not play with "fire" without having a comprehensive understanding of the consequences both immediate and long-term. **Shamsher Chowdhury**

**"War in Iraq"**

This is in reference to Mr. Satyajit's letter (February 17) about war in Iraq. I fail to understand his justification behind America's stance towards war. I agree that UN was, to some extent, unable to control Saddam Hussein but that does not give America the right to take measures in its own hands by heading out to kill millions of innocent people. Haven't they learnt from previous experience (the Gulf War) that killing fields are not the answer to the problem at hand? The writer only talked about the infrastructural damage and Saddam's limited access to weapons but he turned a blind eye to the people that will be affected.

The Iraqi people have had enough of this. The UN sanctions and the war have really taken its toll on Iraq. Maybe Mr Satyajit should pay a visit to Iraq and see for himself what catastrophe wars can bring, the aftermath of which is still lingering in the air. And another thing that needs to be said, America may have wiped out the Taliban but they were not able to capture Osama Bin Laden who was the sole reason why America attacked Afghanistan in the first place. **M. Rashid, Uttara, Dhaka**

In his letter, Mr Styajit claims that America has succeeded in

**Dhaka Of drugs and drug lords**

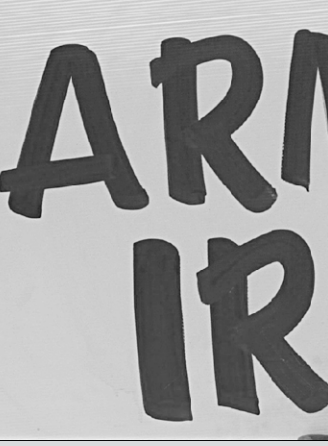
One thing that I find really annoying is the low opinion the politicians have of the public's brainpower. Recently Minister Nazmul Huda bulldozed yet another slum this time claiming that heroin peddling would stop now because the slum was the source of heroin sales.

Heroin selling if it took place in the slum was certainly not supplied by the slum's inhabitants, they didn't ship it into the country either. I would suggest that Mr. Huda please go to the source of the heroin market, he may find many big fish and parts of the state administration namely the police, to the main sources of all the drugs that enter this country

allegedly illegally. **Scherezad Latif On e-mail**

**NGO fund blockage**

It is quite amusing to see the government putting the squeeze on our NGOs by blocking their funds. Your article on February 17 reports on the poor people who are suffering because NGOs like Proshika can't continue their activities. I am sure such noble thoughts did not occur to our NGOs when they started getting actively involved with politics before the last elections. Maybe Proshika would be kind enough to divert money from its businesses like their ISP and continue their projects. The whole NGO culture in



Afghanistan. If that were true, then why are the troops still there? I have not yet heard the drums of democracy resounding in the caves of Tora Bora and I don't plan to hold my

breath either. But the positive news is, opium production is at an all time high. In Afghanistan, America has only succeeded in dropping a lot of bombs, in killing a lot of civilians (that is



collateral damage in US government lingo), and moving the dust around. When Saddam invaded Iran on the same pretence with which he invaded Kuwait 20 years later, no one questioned Mr Saddam's ethics, methods or actions. When Saddam used mustard gas against Iranian soldiers, and on the Kurds, that was ok too, because, it was right in line with the convoluted US foreign policy. Now, that Saddam has parted ways with the US, he is now a madman, "who kills his own people."

During the 20 years that he has killed and mutilated people leading up the Gulf war, his tyranny was never an issue. Neither was it an issue during and after the Gulf War. But, to our surprise, after Bush Jr's axis of evil speech, Saddam suddenly became a threat to the United States. When that argument didn't fly, he was then portrayed as a "butcher". Since that wasn't still convincing enough, the argument now is that he is in cohort with the Al-Qaeda. In the face of opposition from the Security Council, Mr. Blair playing second fiddle to the US, is saying that it would be humane to remove Saddam. The hypocrisy in such rhetoric is clear. Let us not forget either, that it was the US which dropped the two atomic bombs on Hiro-

shima and Nagasaki. Military historians will tell you that it was necessary to end the war. Yet the war was not in Hiroshima or Nagasaki, but was being fought in the Islands of Iwo jima and Okinawa. Also, by that time the allies had already overrun Europe. I am sure, there was a humanitarian reason for the atomic holocaust, as was the reason for the carpet bombing in Vietnam using Napalm bombs and agent orange defoliants. Deaths of civilians in those wars were also, I am sure, in the eyes of the US, "sad but necessary".

As the protests against the war held around the world in the last few days show, people are waking up to and confronting an evil being perpetrated in the name of humanity and freedom that is far more dangerous than Mr. Saddam himself. Saddam should be taken to task, but not by the very same people that put him there and supported him all these years.

In conclusion, I cannot but laugh at Mr. Satyajit's suggestions that we should side with the US and Britain. No thank you Mr Satyajit. One of our disgraced sons, a Mr. Mir Jafar did that over two hundred years ago. And look what happened. **Shomit Chowdhury Dhaka, Bangladesh**

the objective. And also will ensure patrolling the highway to keep it safe.

ZIA is the gateway to our country and we need to improve it now. **Tanzia Chowdhury Dhaka**

**Peace process in Middle East**

Every time violence erupts in Middle East, we hear Israel and USA always blaming Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian people. They blame Mr Arafat for not choosing the "peaceful" path. However, not so long ago, a peaceful way out of the endless cycle of bloodshed in Mid-East was offered by Crown Prince Abdullah. Palestinian people accepted it, but Israeli people decided not to take that chance.

Recently the leader of Israeli Labour party, Amran Mitzna offered Israeli people another chance for peace. To achieve that, he proposed an end to occupation, immediate peace talk (which is most likely to succeed when occupation is ended) and closing illegal Jewish settlements. Israeli people had a perfect chance to bring an end to the death and destruction of thousands of people on both sides. Once again, they decided not to choose peace. Perhaps the idea of getting thousands of acres of land for "free" was too tempting for them.

Whatever the reason, we all know for sure that whenever violence erupts in the occupied Palestine, Palestinians are always blamed! They are blamed for not choosing the "peaceful" path which is never offered to them. While Israel continues to defy all UN resolutions and throw away every peaceful solution offered to it. **Azad Miah Oldham, UK**

**Columbia crash**

Changing through TV channels when I came to know about the disaster of the space shuttle, I was shocked. The incident that happened to Colombia Space Shuttle, was not supposed to happen.

When technology is at its highest in the USA the Columbia Space shuttle crashed. The lives that are lost in this mission were very precious not only to USA but also to rest of the world. This incident took a back turn in the scientific era of human kind. As far the history tells us NASA is probably known to be the best in space technology. It all happened when Russian Space technology was getting better than that of NASA. It was NASA, who took it as a challenge and wanted to go beyond their competitors. At one stage they were successful, and a new era of space science had begun for the American people. But the incident that took place was very shocking for the world. It shows that we have a long way to go, before humans can colonise in other planets.

We have to admit that the loss of these brave souls reveals the drawbacks of NASA. Well, perfection is something that cannot be achieved so easily by humankind I pray for the departed souls, whom we can never forget. Still I ask a question, can't we be more cautious, when we know that this is a dangerous as well as risky thing to do? How many lives do we have to give up before we can ever explore or colonise other planets? **Rizwan Hussain Bahra Mohammadpur, Dhaka**

**"Ethics"-- a different type of letter**

Really, Robert W. Carlson's letter "Ethics" (February 17) was a different type of letter. If we all can start thinking like Mr. Robertson, we can definitely build a better world. I hope Mr. Robertson will write on this topic in details and help us to think in a different but beautiful way. **Shahrin Shahjahan Naomi Dhaka**

**Right to celebrate Valentine's Day**

This is in response to Mr. Yahya's letter ("Valentine's Day", February 17, 2003). The writer was very much right what he wrote in his letter. I also believe that no one has the right to prohibit others from celebrating Valentine's Day. If you do not like it, that's okay; but you better keep your mouth shut. Because you do not have the right to interfere with others freedom. That's ridiculous. **Minhaj Ahmed Uttara, Dhaka**