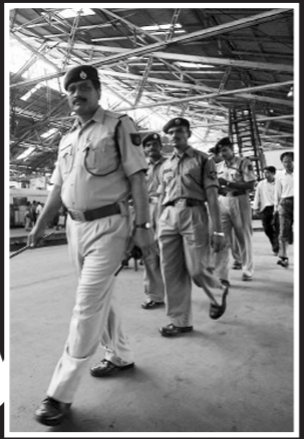


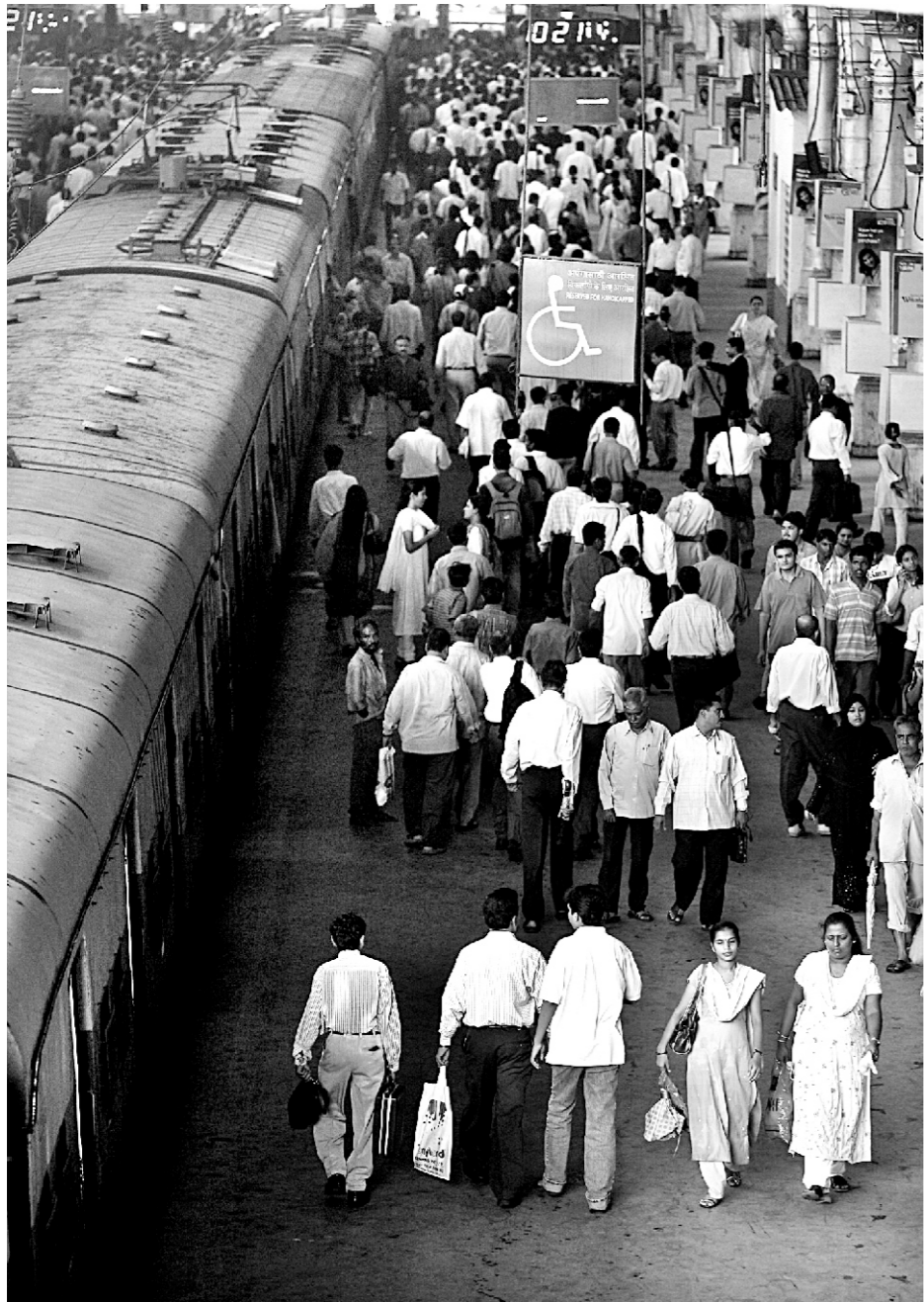
Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

Crime against humanity



The serial bomb blasts in Mumbai were a crime against humanity. The railway tracks in Mumbai were flooded with blood. The ruthless terrorists killed nearly 200 innocent people. They lost their lives without knowing what was their crime!

We are deeply shocked.
Solaiman Palash, East Jurain, Dhaka



চন্দ্রসুন্দর
ডা
ভদ্রসুন্দর

Rajuk and new rules

Newspapers have rightly criticised some of Rajuk's influential officials for playing a negative role in implementing the new building rules. The new government decision has been duly gazetted and is now awaiting implementation, which has been unnecessarily delayed by Rajuk!

The extension of the old rules for processing up to 31st August as advised by the Ministry of Housing & Settlement to help small plot owners is appreciated but they have not asked Rajuk to suspend the new rules! Why cannot Rajuk simultaneously give their approval under the new rules? This is desired by a number of land owners in Gulshan, Banani and other areas that were waiting for this realistic and eco-friendly approach to city development, and wish to build under the new rules.

If Rajuk states they do not have the manpower, I believe it is lame excuse. The parameters of the new rules can be easily programmed into computers and it will be easy for approval of proposed layouts (under new rules) against these programmed parameters. Rajuk may even ask for a refundable fee, which they can refund after physically inspecting the site and seeing that it matches the plan; which may take some time. They can engage a few architects to do this on their behalf. All these steps can speed up the process, and it should not take more than three or four weeks for initial approval.

Frankly, if there is a will, there is a way. What is happening now is unnecessary procrastination to get more underhand payments that has reportedly become a Rajuk norm. How long will this milking the cow of corruption go on? It is time the government takes a positive and firm stand and force Rajuk to immediately accept plans and pass them within four weeks under the new rules.

The present world's competitiveness is just inexpressible in words, be it in the fields of marketing, academics, politics or sports, there is competition everywhere. My point being about football, I would like to ask anyone who is willing to answer—can Bangladesh even play in the World cup qualifiers? But asking why can't they come into the international arena is just very stupid. Bangladesh is a football-mad nation. Hundreds of foreign flags flutter on rooftops during the month-long extravaganza. Imagine if Bangladesh finally make it to the World Cup! I bet these flags will become unique-green and red. The dying football fans are hoping for promotion of football in the country. Let's hope for a better future.
Mohammed Fahim Hara
Dilu Road Eskatan road,
Dhaka

Why this plan?

Please refer to the news item published in your daily on 11 July 2006 titled, "By-polls in vacant parliamentary seat; draft bill okayed to extend time limit to 180 days."

I'm sure you will address the subject in your editorial column soon.

To my mind, as a concerned citizen of Bangladesh, the effort looks ominous for the following reasons:

1. The new EC headed by the much talked about CEC seems to have orchestrated this amendment through PMO with a view to avoiding a test exam prior to the final exam.
2. The law minister refers to 'some countries' having provisions to nominate MPs in the seats falling vacant and to Malaysia with a provision of an approved period of two years for bi-election of MPs. He is conspicuously silent about the provisions of British and/or Indian parliaments to this effect, from where we inherited our parliamentary democracy.
3. The advantage of the people to be able to gauge the popularity of the political parties prior to the general election didn't merit any consideration!
4. The rationale of the benefit of the EC to be able to hold a dress rehearsal prior to the major drama also didn't merit any consideration!

Wali
On e-mail

Oil tanker disaster

This refers to the letter under the heading "420-Oil tanker disaster" by Mr. ME Haque from Chittagong which appeared in your daily on 10 July, 2006. The official inquiry report on the disaster as it appeared in the front page of DS of 7 July was perhaps the first of its kind on such an incident in Bangladesh. Lot of failures, indifference to safe practice/regulations were reported to have been observed.

It is however noted with concern that no specific recommendation against wrong doing, if any, on the part of the staff/owner seemed to have been made. Therefore, at least an IMO sponsored fact-finding exercise to determine the circumstances leading to this serious tanker-explosion could be a step in the right direction by Bangladesh authorities in the interest of all concerned. By doing so there is all the possibility of enhancing our standing as a maritime nation.

Z. Rahman
Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212

Communalism in undivided Bengal

It was disappointing to read the article written by Taj Hashmi because it parroted the Muslim League's same old version of history of Pakistan as the struggle of Bengali Muslims against the oppressive and exploiting Hindus. Although he prefaced his essay with a conceptual analysis on distinguishing communalism with religious revivalism, it does not clarify why Muslim communalism leads inevitably towards medievalism. Taj Hashmi's supposed Marxist twist to this theory is that it was a class struggle of exploited and poor Muslim peasants against

the rich Hindu land owners. What he suppresses is that neither Hindus nor Muslims constituted a neat category of homogenous class in the Marxist sense. More important, it was the colonial British state which exploited the peasants and appropriated their surplus. Hindu zamindars were mere intermediaries. So the real class enemy of Bengali peasants (both Hindu and Muslim) was the colonial British rulers. It was really very clever of the non-Bengali Muslim League leadership that

for many centuries. Even commanding posts in the Bengal army were held by Rajput Hindus. Establishment of Muslim monarchy in the 13th century did not change this hierarchy in Bengal. Even up to the end of the 19th century, the leaders of Bengal's Muslims were urdu speaking non-Bengalis of Uttar Pradesh living in Calcutta, Murshidabad etc. Only with the rise of AKM Fazlul Huq the Bengali Muslims for the first time found their own spokesman. Unfortunately, he succumbed to

ture of aristocracy in pre-capitalist society of Bengal. Communalism was fostered as a policy by Muslim League leadership to protect the privilege and wealth of Muslim Talukdars by fighting Congress in the political game of acquiring position and power in the central government of independent India. The Brits abetted this policy by enacting Communal Award of 1932 which divided the Bengalis on communal line politically. Communalism was not the struggle of Bengali Muslims to end their class exploitation as Taj Hashmi explains. The communal thinking in Tagore and Sharat Chatterjee highlighted by the Paki intellectuals did not deter the Bengali Muslims to accept and place them in the hall of fame of great Bengalis.

The Swadeshi movement (1905-1911) was the first armed struggle against the British colonialism organised by Hindu middle class comparable to Sinn Fein. Taj Hashmi describes it as Hindu rivalism as Muslim League historiography does.

There were many middle class Bengali Muslim politicians and literati who opposed the 1905 partition, fought for unity and integration of Bengali Muslims and Hindus on cultural and ethnic ground and never succumbed to Muslim League's communal politics. Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam was the brightest among them and for this he was honoured as the National Poet of Bengal in 1929 in Calcutta by the Hindu elite. Taj Hashmi also repeats the Paki story about the great Calcutta killing. But who called the Direct Action Day? And who were in the government then?

Communalism as an ideology of Muslim exclusivism is still very powerful in Bangladesh and Bengali Muslim bourgeois has made it a foundation of their politics. With the burgeoning culture of Islamisation propagated by the ruling political regime and Jihadist ideals permeating the urban and rural poor classes educated in Madrasahs, Bangladesh is destined to remain in the backwater of medievalism. Meanwhile the upper caste Bengali Hindu elite became Maxist and progressed towards creating a modern, egalitarian and secular society in the other part of Bengal. Taj Hashmi fails to clarify why Hindu communalism transformed into Marxism in West Bengal and Muslim communalism is drifting towards revivalism in Bangladesh. I'd request Taj Hashmi to interpret the history of 20th century Bengal in the perspective of a Bengali nationalist and discard the intellectual baggage of Paki ideology.

Ibne Azad
10/3 Mirpur
Dhaka

Sharia laws

This refers to the article titled "Fundamentalism, Extremism and Islam" by Mr. Md. Anwarul Kabir, published in The Daily Star of the 7th instant. Mr. Kabir in his article has advocated modernising the Sharia laws. As the major sources of such laws are the Holy Quran, Hadith and Sunnah, we should treat them as the divine rules and so there is no scope for amending them.

In fact these laws are the guidelines for the Muslims to live in this

Pope's campaign



I commend Pope Benedict XVI's tireless campaign aimed at defending the traditional family against gay marriage and other challenges to church doctrine such as divorce, contraception, abortion, and embryonic stem cell research. Today, the way current laws are progressing - or rather devolving - speaking in defence of life and the rights of families is becoming in some societies sort of a crime against the state.

Being free, in such societies, means being able to do whatever one wants, not being bound to accept any criterion other than and over and above oneself. It means following one's own desires and one's own will alone. Those who live like this very soon clash with others who want to live the same way. The inevitable consequence of this selfish concept of freedom is violence and the mutual destruction of freedom and life.

True freedom is demonstrated in responsibility, in a way of behaving in which one takes upon oneself a shared responsibility for the world, for oneself and for others. In contrast, the freedom of slaves aims to cut itself a slice of the cake that belongs to everyone even if this means that some do not get any. Our world is full of such fictitious forms of freedom that destroy the environment and the human being.

The family is a unique institution demanding universal proclamation of each person's primordial right to life, from conception to natural death, the right to live in a family without it being substituted or confused by other forms or different institutions.

Paul Kokoski, On e-mail

they could successfully mobilise the Bengali Muslims on the false belief that Hindus were their enemies and realise Pakistan by not waging war against the British but against the Hindus.

The debacle at Plassey did not affect the Bengali speaking Muslim peasants a bit as they were nowhere in the power structure of Nawabi Bengal. The civil service, trade all were exclusive Hindu domain because they were the majority and traditionally they held those services

the non-Bengali leaders of the Muslim League and the subsequent history of Bengali Muslims in 23 years of Hindu free East Pakistan is the proof of falsehood of the Pakistani version of history which Taj Hashmi endorsed. Communalism did not originate due to Hindu Bhadrakol's attitude towards the Bengali Muslims. The Hindu upper caste and Ashraf non-Bengali Muslims behaved the same way towards the low-caste Bengali speaking Hindu and Muslim peasants. It was the cul-



Sheikh Hasina's India trip: Indian view

I am an Indian by nationality. In the past few days Bangladesh opposition leader Sheikh Hasina's trip has created a debate. Many readers in turn expressed their views about India. I was amazed to read Mr Hasan Mir's views. India (apart from the USSR) was the only country, which stood by Bangali people in 1971.

Did China send its army? Did Saudi Arabia send aid for Bangali refugees?

In fact, the Saudi representative in the UN tried to interrupt Sardar Swaran Singh (then India foreign minister) while he was pleading for Bangladesh.

The relations are now bogged down by trade imbalance. Doesn't Bangladesh have the same problem with China, USA? So why a different attitude towards India?
Ashwin, Mumbai, India

temporal world.
Ali Ahmed
Oxford Street, UK

Selling gas

Thanks to Eram Mahboob for his letter of July 11 entitled "Selling gas". Mr. Mahboob has rightly pointed out that people of this country are kept in dark about the energy resources of the country by our governments. Fortunately, quite a large number of experts in this filed time and again proved that the energy resources in our country are insufficient even to satisfy the minimum requirement of our huge population.

Moreover, selling gas will not be economical but proposals are being put forward to sell it. That is the reason why I want that this country should have a law that sons and/or daughters of politicians must not stay abroad, and only then they will start to think about the development of the country.
Dr. Mahboob Hossain
Associate Professor
Department of Pharmacy
The University of Asia Pacific,
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Zidane, tearful adieu!

I failed to recognise the point of your article titled, "Zidane has been punished, why not Materazzi?" If it was your contention that Materazzi should have been punished for tugging at Zidane's shirt or for insulting him, then referees in professional football would be flashing yellow card and red card every two minutes of every game. You can watch replays of the incident time and time again and you will see no instance on Materazzi's part of a bookable offence. Sledging in sports dates back to the history of sport itself - at every level.

Furthermore, there is no irrefutable evidence of what was exchanged between Materazzi and Zidane.

You also go on about the poor officiating by Horacio Elizondo and try to link that to Zidane's headbutt. Yes, the Italians were relentless in marking Zidane. But they were certainly not brutal to the great Zizou as you claim. If anything, Horacio was very generous in awarding France a penalty for a non-existent foul. But to defend Zidane's actions by blaming the referee just smacks of desperation.

To conclude, your suggestion that FIFA force players to wear listening devices is not only ridiculous but hardly feasible. Why not just tape players' mouths before they enter the pitch? It would be cheaper, and it would have the desired effect -- football would be played with the feet and the head, and not with the mouth.
Farshed Mahmud, New York City

I was deeply shocked and dismayed at what turned out to be a shattering end of an illustrious and glittering career of the finest footballer

I have ever seen in my life, Zinedine Zidane. Zizou certainly deserved being sent off in the final match of the World Cup in Berlin for the horrendous offence he committed but it was truly a pathetic scene for all the football fans around the world to see such a legendary footballer's career coming to an abrupt end. To add to this sorry tale, Zidane was not even allowed to join the post match presentation ceremony.

Perhaps Materazzi, whom Zidane knocked down by a head butt, said something, which sparked the sudden display of lunacy (as I would term it) by Zidane. Otherwise, it was quite an unexpected behaviour from someone like Zidane who is a friendly gentleman as far as I know. I think FIFA should carry out further scrutiny over the matter to elicit if the Italian defender was involved in any sort of offensive talk and should take certain disciplinary measures if it was so.

Zidane is leaving us indelible memories of a shining career spanning twelve years. During this long period of time, he has kept the fans mesmerized with his astute football tactics and deft skills with which he manoeuvres the ball magically evading the defenders. Hopefully, someone might carry on the good work Zidane is leaving (though might not be with that same dazzling neatness like Zidane) but the fact that his career ended in that shocking manner will leave an agonising scar in Zidane's memory, which will be pined by millions of football fans across the world.
Md. Sabbir Saadat
European Standard School, Dhaka

Zidane, the legendary footballer of this millennium, favourite of all the football lovers of the world irrespective of all countries, shocked us all on 10 July 2006. In spite of being a supporter of Italy, I was expecting & waiting to see the grand farewell celebrations of Zidane. But he broke the hearts of football lovers hitting one of the opponents by his head.

The complete gentle footballer did the wrong at the very last moment of his career. He might have complained to the referee. Why did he do so?

Mrinal Sarkar

