

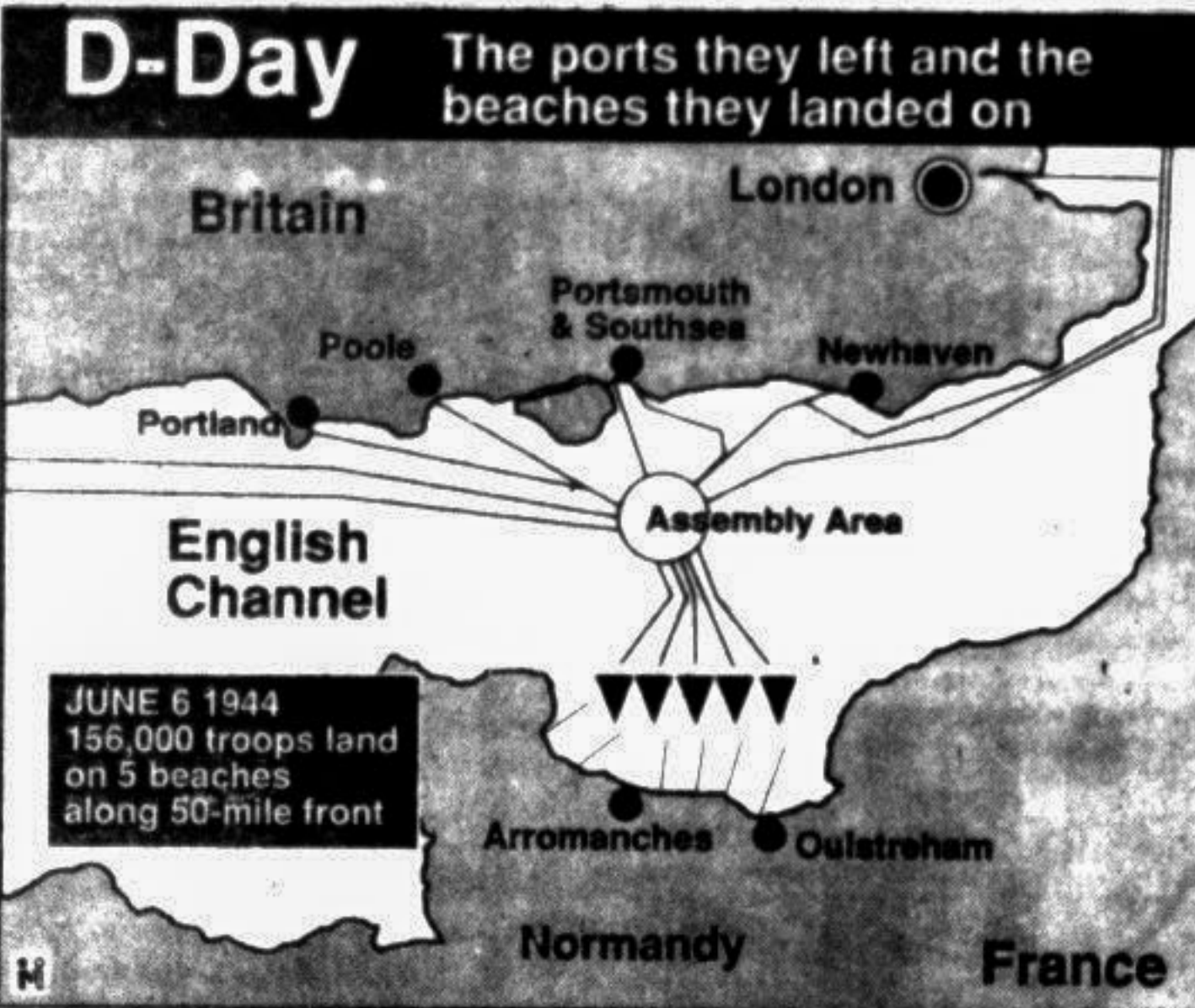


LOOKING INTO 1994-ANNIVERSARIES

The Day that Hitler Began to Bite the Dust

Of the many significant anniversaries in 1994, none will be commemorated more widely than D-Day 50 years ago. On June 6 1944 Allied forces launched the long-planned final onslaught on occupied France that ended the Nazi nightmare of attempted world domination. In 1994 it will also be 25 years since man landed on the moon. Gemini News Service reports on all our yesterdays.

Nicola Cole writes from London



The last major celebration of its kind. Thousands of old soldiers from all over the world will be revisiting north-west Europe to take part in the commemorative programme. As well as memorial services for fallen comrades there will be landing re-enactments, special tours of the Normandy battlefields, World War Two fighter and bomber fly-pasts, military vehicle rallies, searchlight displays, parades, dedicated exhibitions, dances and "embarkation" evenings. This will be a year of mixed emotions, of memories happy and frivolous as well as those which still cause veterans to wake from nightmare sweating and cursing. They adopt brave faces — as did their fathers who survived the grossly misnamed Great War, which erupted on a hot, sunny August day 80 years ago, incredibly attracting sightseers and butterfly-catchers to the early killing fields. The slaughter of innocents, the ruthless waste of lives (including almost 67,000 Indian troops loyal to the Crown), the coldly savage execution of "shell-shocked" deserters (largely men of valour broken by the strain) — all will be remembered, though the youngest who fought are now 90 years of age and one of the final triggers, the assassination of Hapsburg heir Archduke

of the dice — Churchill's mordant dismissal of the Fuhrer's 1944-45 rocket assault on Britain — and the 1969 moon landings facilitated by the capture of Von Braun and other German Pocket scientists.

The "Space Race" bequeathed us improved non-stick frying-pans, yet has inspired no widespread wish to start colonising the stars. If anything, it has prompted a retreat from unknown frontiers to a fresh appreciation of security within existing borders. This may well be evident in independence anniversary celebrations during 1994, when Norway marks 180 years of nationhood, Iceland and Vietnam 90 years, Malta 29 years and St Lucia 19 years.

The past is a place of refuge as well as a world of regret. In forgiving and forgetting, we may prefer to let the spectres of Stalin, 40 years dead, and the Watergate scandal of two decades ago lie undisturbed. Altogether more agreeable is the recollection that 150 years have passed since the birth of Archibald Spooner, the amiably disordered English cleric who unintentionally raised verbal transposition to an art-form.

With inadvertencies like "Is it kismetary to cuss the bride?" and the hymn announcement "Kinquering Kong their titles take" he earned his place in history as surely as the kings themselves.

NICOLA COLE is a British freelance writer.

I was unusually cold for an early March morning. My friends at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts tried their best to stop me from driving back to New Haven, Connecticut, roughly 150 miles south. The year was 1985. The previous summer (in May) I graduated from Yale University and at twentyone years of age I decided to see more of life before taking the plunge into reality and a career. So I went on cross-country travelling. On my return to New Haven, home to my alma mater, in February '85, I was settling down to plan my future. It was from here that I went to pay a short visit to my friends from Residential Model School in Dhaka who were then seniors (fourth year students) at Brandeis.

Back in Waltham a nasty snowstorm had brewed up early in the morning and visibility was less than twenty feet. But I was determined to keep my appointment in New Haven in the afternoon the same day. As I turned on to Interstate 95, the highway running along the east coast of the New England region, I found myself all alone and my rented Dodge K car found itself on a thick turf of snow. Squinting my eyes for every single ray of light I surged ahead totally oblivious of the fact that my wheels were barely touching ground. The speedometer needle was nudging 65 miles an hour, only 10 miles above the speed limit. In less than two hours, before noon I crossed into the state of Connecticut. The snowstorm had by now subsided and there was modest traffic on the highway. There were trucks spreading salt on the road to melt the ice. As a testimony to their work puddles

THE SAGA OF AN ENTREPRENEUR

First Part: Coming Home

by H N Karim

of water were visible here and there on the six-lane highway. It was at this time that a great revelation dawned on me. The voice inside me smarted "Karim get hold of yourself; you are driving too fast for this kind of weather." I obliged and pulled my K car into the slower traffic along the right-most lane. I patted myself on the back, so to speak and said to myself "Karim, you have done the right thing." I pushed along well under the speed limit behind a beat-up pick-up truck. As if as a premonition of what is to come I could feel the whooshing air-turbulence as an eighteen wheeler slowly passed me on the left lane. We were nearing an exit off the highway into Groton, a nice little town in Connecticut more famous as a submarine base of the US Navy than for its scenic beauty in the fall season (Connecticut is very famous for its forests of maple, elm and cedar trees which turn to colourful foliage in the months before winter). Just as the pickup truck ahead of me was almost past the exit ramp, it screeched to a near halt and swerved sharply down the exit. It left me no choice but to hit my own brakes as hard as I could. My Dodge K car spun hopelessly out of control around the front left wheel and started to cross into the left lane despite my frantic pumping of the brakes. In suspended animation I watched the front of my car surely going under the trailer of a eigh-

teen wheeler truck moving very fast past me on the left lane. Apparently the left front wheel responded to the brakes and stuck to the road while the right front wheel which happened to be on a sheet of sleet, simply skidded causing the car to spin to the left (anti-lock braking system that prevents cars from spinning and skidding is available on most recent cars but it was a luxury then found on the likes of Mercedes only). I could feel the car hitting the forward wheels of the trailer as I hit my neck hard into the steering wheel. Of course I was not wearing my seat-belt (only weenies do). With an instant thud the car threw itself back at the rear wheels of the trailer. After a second heavy jolt my precious little K car spun out from under the trailer and slammed into the guard rails of the highway. As I snapped myself out of the trance-like state I was in, I found myself in a metal cocoon slammed shut on all sides, windows broken, windshield cracked and back-seats pressing against me. All this while the driver of the gallant truck on the left lane sped along, blissfully ignorant of what happened at the back end. After a bit of a struggle I could pull myself out of the hapless car through the driver-side window. As I stood outside in the shivering cold contemplating my plight, I saw a tall and lanky man running towards me. As he came closer I could

see the specks of icicles on his thick red mustache. His red veins were literally jutting out of his translucent skin. His face though friendly his eyes spoke horror. "How are ya man. I as scared to death when that bloke behind me told me on CB (citizen band radio, popularly known as Ham Radio; most truckers in USA carry CB's for talking to each other and sharing vital information like highway patrol lurking around a bend ahead) I had been hit. Are you ok man?" he blurted out as he gasped for breath. "I am carrying 18000 lbs back in that trailer. I could not even feel your car come hit me. Oh man is it a mess or what," continued the driver of the truck whose tail-end was kissed by my car, as he looked at my ill-fated car now reduced to a metal pulp. Within minutes highway patrol arrived at the scene. Two policemen jumped out of the patrol car and took a quick glance at the totalled car. One of them approached me and without any introduction asked flat "Where are the dead bodies?" They stared at me in total disbelief when I told them that I was the lone person in the car and survived the holocaust without even a scratch. "It's a miracle," they exclaimed. "It's a miracle indeed!" I mused. After taking down the necessary information, the highway patrolmen gave me a ride to the nearest railway station. From there I boarded a train for New Haven still badly shaken from the worst accident of my life. On the train I felt very blank. I decided it was time to go home. Five days later on March 11th I landed in Dhaka. With a sixty thousand dollar education and one hundred fifty dollar to my name, I was home again.

Dhaka-Colombo Travel

Continued from page 9

would cost each of us close to Rs 2,500. To cap it all, it was well past 10 pm. When, therefore, a middle-aged man with a bush of greyish hair approached me with a neatly printed leaflet billing the tariffs of a hotel and I cast a quick glance at the same, I was beyond myself with joy.

"We offer free lift to our clients from and back to the airport, sir," said hotel agent Mr. Nurullah by way of giving a filip to our decision-making process.

Next morning, after a tensile breakfast at the hotel's restaurant, Shahidullah rang up the Indian Airlines principal office in Madras at 9-30 am. Precisely thirty minutes later, Shahidullah, who had been asked by the Indian Airlines office to ring it back "about half an hour later" and who had, all along this time, been restlessly reading his watch, rang up again. This time Mr Krishnamurti was available and the developments — all

favourable. Yes, he had received Mrs. Moullick's telex message. She was sorry that things had jumbled up and asked us to report at the airport for check-in exactly at 4 pm so that — he jokingly added — we were the first two passengers for his staff at the airport to clear for the Airlines' 6 pm flight.

Things went on smoothly amid Sri Lankan Government's warm hospitality at that five-star hotel, standing almost on the shore of the Indian Ocean and offering an enchanting view from its rooftop rooms, until the morning of 12th November when, during the tea/coffee break, Lokman, who was entrusted with the task of having our backward travel reservations reconfirmed, tuned up to report that our reservations on Madras-Calcutta and Calcutta-Dhaka routes were all right but the same on the Colombo-Madras route was not so. Our reservations on the Indian Airlines' Colombo-Madras flight of 13th November were, according to his information, cancelled

following instructions — to cap it all — from "Mr. Kabir".

It was, in fact, the consideration of any possible foul play in the form of an underhand deal, at some stage that prompted us to think of reconfirmation of our return tickets as the first thing to get done. And, viewing it not to be in the fitness of things to throw our High Commission man into the tentacles of what might be an organised racket, Shahidullah took back the tickets from Lokman and handed the same to the Sri Lankan Government's host officer whose charge we were.

But even the new move proved to be of little use. As we returned to the hotel in the evening after some sight-seeing and purchases, a typed message from the host officer along with our passports and tickets was awaiting us at the reception counter. He could not get our reservation confirmed. This time I myself could not help feeling dejected. With the message, passports and tickets in hand I slumped into a couch in the lounge. Then a query in Bengali — in Dhakaite dialect,

to be precise — made me turn aside. "What has happened to the confirmation of your tickets?"

That was Mr B K Mitra, a Joint Secretary in India's External Affairs Ministry and one of the members of the Indian delegation to the IGG meeting. A few of his childhood days having been passed in Dhaka, his parents still speaking Dhakaite dialect at home and he having his education in English-medium institutions all through, on the one hand, and being an officer of the foreign service cadre, on the other, apparently learnt to switch only between two alternatives — either Dhakaite dialect on fluent and sonorous English.

Wordlessly I handed him the message. "There seems to be something fishy somewhere," said he musingly and added, "give me your flight and ticket numbers. I shall see if I can do something for you".

So the arrangement was that he, who was leaving for New Delhi at 10 pm on that night, would look into the matter at the Indian Airlines' Colombo

airport office.

Shahidullah, who was incidentally not present during our conversation, was still feeling fidgety and the first thing that he did on the following day was to walk down the one-kilometre way to the Indian Airlines' principal office in Colombo along with our passports and tickets. There, to his utter relief, he found our reservations to have already been confirmed — a pointer to what must have been a pincer-attack by Mr Mitra on whatever it was — foul play or inadvertent mistake on the previous night.

Back at Madras, we were three, instead of two, to put up at Hotel Mars. The third was Mr R M Roy, a Director of the SAARC Secretariat, who flew into Madras along with us by the same flight and who, incidentally had been our co-passenger on the Madras-Colombo flight as well.

Having nothing else to do except watching the counter man do things irritatingly sluggish, I got at Mr Roy.

"Do you cease to be an international bureaucrat, Mr Roy", said I, "once you are in-

side your own country?"

"I can't be sure before I put my passport to a test," Mr Roy quipped back.

"Why not do that?" said I and added, "In case you succeed, please don't forget to bail us out as your two stooges".

Mr Roy gave a full hearted laugh, left the queue, leaving me in charge of his bag, and soon returned to announce that he had succeeded in both the missions.

When things start moving smoothly, they seemingly forget how to do otherwise.

For us too things moved very smoothly thereafter so that when we flew into Calcutta at almost midnight and were apprehensive whether we would have any retiring room to pass the night in, we got an air-conditioned one allotted to us immediately on approach — allotted graciously upto 1-20 am of 15th November. And it was almost precisely at 11-20 am that the aircraft carrying Biman's insignia took off from the Calcutta airport on its twenty-eight-minute flight to Dhaka.

The British Council Language Matters

The Intro

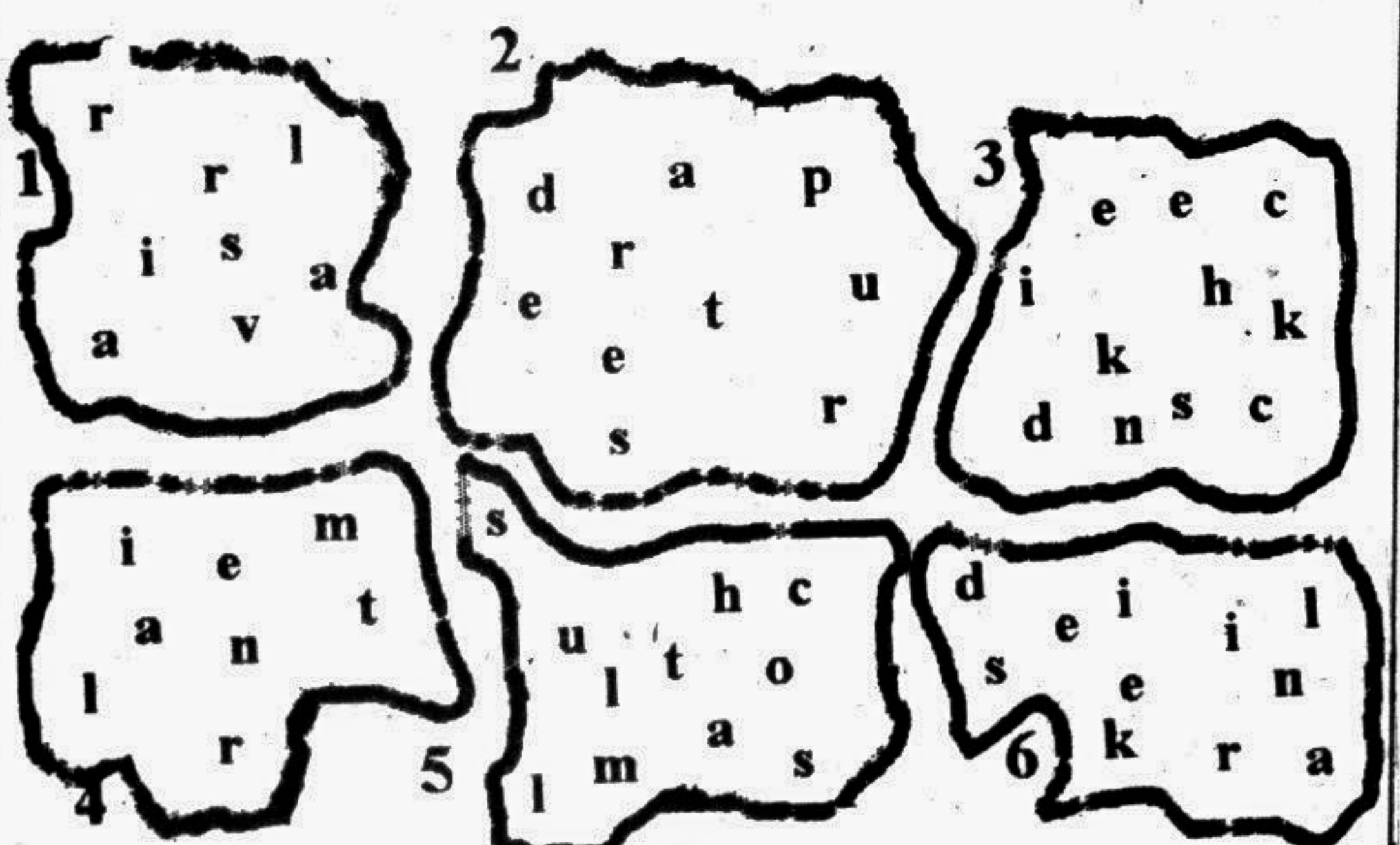
This week's column sees the return of a few teasers; quick questions about small points! There is also the usual Wobbly Words puzzle but perhaps a little more difficult this time. Remember that all the words have something in common.

If you have difficulty with any of them, the easy ones should give you a clue.

We have also taken the opportunity this week to answer a few questions in the Language Lab - questions which come from all over the country!

Wobbly Words

Try this word puzzle. In each shape the letters are jumbled up. Put them in the correct order. What do they all have in common? Be careful. Some shapes have more than one word.



1. 2. 3. 4.
5. 6.

The Language Lab

In this column we want you to write to us about any little problems that you have with English and we will see if we can 'analyse' them. We will try to give the best answer possible in the space available.

1
Md Kayser Ahmed from Rajshahi writes to ask...

Can we consider the letter 'y' the sixth vowel of the English alphabet?

It is not easy to give a simple answer to this question. The letter 'y' is sometimes pronounced as a vowel (as in 'hymn') and sometimes as a consonant (as in yet).

More to the point is that, when it is pronounced as a vowel, it is not always the same one: consider *hymn*, *hymen*, *way* & *boy*.

It is something of a mistake to talk of English having 5 vowels. There are generally considered to be 5 written vowels, and so in this context the letter 'y' could be considered to be number 6 - sometimes!

However, the truth is that standard British English has 20 vowels!!

Of these 8 are diphthongs. Although this can also vary

somewhat from accent to accent. 'What?!' you may ask. 'How can that be?'

Well the problem lies in the very familiar issue of English spelling. Many sounds do not have a letter of the alphabet to represent them. For this reason there is a phonetic alphabet which uses symbols to represent the sound of words rather than the spelling. If you have a good dictionary, you can check and you will find that these are used between slanting lines (/ /) to show you how to pronounce words.

In recent weeks there have been a number of articles in this column, which have attempted to illustrate these problems - words that are spelt the same but not pronounced the same, or, indeed, pronounced the same but spelt differently.

2
With reference to the use of symbols to help pronunciation we could also give a quick answer to a question from Md Kurshid Anwar of Chittagong.

He asked if the pronunciation of many words could be represented by letters; eg *energy* = NRG, *empty* = MT etc.

Unfortunately, this idea is a lot of fun but it does not work. A word of more than one syllable will have a stress on one of them and the others will be 'reduced'. If,

however, you read out a sequence of letters, they will all be equally stressed and so it will not sound the same. In other words the second syllable of 'energy' does not sound like the letter R.

3
Also today, a quick answer to a question sent in by Syed A Rahman from Dhaka.

He wanted to know the difference between 'conscience' and 'consciousness'.

In a way, the best answer to a question like this is that a serious learner of any language needs a good dictionary. That is, one that gives examples of the meanings of various words.

The Collins Cobuild dictionary gives five meanings for 'conscience', all related to the idea of 'a sense of right and wrong'; it gives 4 four meanings for 'consciousness', all of which are related to the idea of awareness.

It would be more or less impossible to explain all the nuances here without simply repeating the dictionary entries.

A good dictionary is an essential tool and the effort to become an experienced user will be well worth it.

If you want to write to us with any questions you have, simple or complicated, please write to The Language Lab, c/o The Daily Star.

Teasers

1. What is special about words that have the letter 'q'?

2. What do we call phrases like these:
I'm pulling your leg.
It turned out to be a white elephant.
I really put my foot in it.

The Word Processor.....



Answers:
1. They are all at an airport.
2. Idioms - the phrase has a meaning which cannot be constructed from the meaning of the individual words.
3. Idioms - the phrase has a meaning which cannot be constructed from the meaning of the individual words.
4. Idioms - the phrase has a meaning which cannot be constructed from the meaning of the individual words.
5. Idioms - the phrase has a meaning which cannot be constructed from the meaning of the individual words.
6. Idioms - the phrase has a meaning which cannot be constructed from the meaning of the individual words.
7. Idioms - the phrase has a meaning which cannot be constructed from the meaning of the individual words.
8. Idioms - the phrase has a meaning which cannot be constructed from the meaning of the individual words.
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