

Shantiniketan Abode of Peace

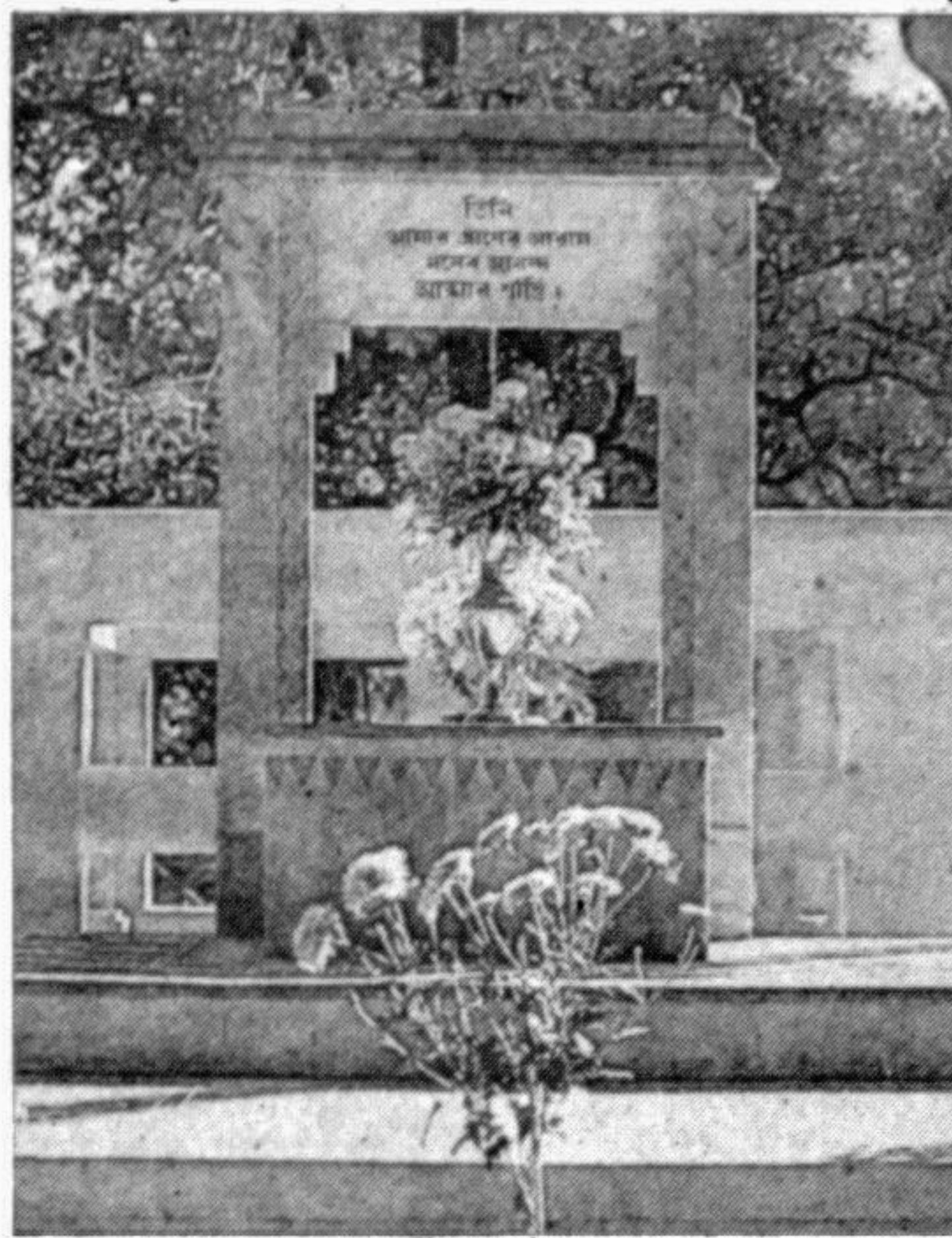
Text and Photographs by Dr Bimla Verma

SHANTINIKETAN — the world famous seat of learning and cultural activities — was founded by Maharishi Devendra Nath Tagore, father of Rabindra Nath Tagore. Once while travelling by boat from Calcutta to Guntia in West Bengal, he was struck by the scenic beauty en route — the paddy fields, the palm trees planted in a row on red laterite soil, and a number of birds and animals ... all these enchanted him no end. He immediately bought seven acres of that land and built a house in the middle. He named it Shantiniketan — 'Abode of Peace'. People started calling it an ashram. In the beginning this ashram was used as a place for rest and relaxation and then for religious, social, literary and political activities. On March 8, 1888, he dedicated this ashram to the nation.

school here with only five students. He patterned this small school on the guru-shishya (teacher-pupil) tradition. Gradually this school grew into a University and since 1921, Shantiniketan has been the seat of Viswa Bharati — an International University seeking to develop a synthesis of the cultures of East and West. Viswa Bharati was recognised as a Central University in 1951. It has teachers and students from both India and abroad. It is a co-educational and residential university.

The northern wing of Shantiniketan is known as Uttarayan. It has five beautiful buildings called Konark, Udaya, Shyamili, Punshraya and Udichi. Shyamili was the favourite abode of Rabindra Nath Tagore. The entire building is made of clay. In 1940, Mahatma Gandhi and his wife Kasturba Gandhi had also stayed here.

For the lovers of art and sculpture, Shantiniketan is a



Chaitanya place of fulfillment. One can see the paintings and scul-



Sculptures by Ram Kinkar Vaiz.



tures of well-known artists — Rabindra Nath Tagore, Nand Lal Bose, Ram-Kinker Vaiz etc. In addition, a collection of Tagore's letters, manuscripts and gifts can be seen in Rabindra Bhavan.

Every year students and teachers at Shantiniketan celebrate three melas (fairs). These are Nandan Mela, Magh Mela and Paus Mela.

Nandan Mela is held on December 1st and 2nd to commemorate the birth anniversary of Nand Lal Bose. During this fair, the students exhibit their artistic talents in the form of paintings, graphic work, clay articles, terracotta ornaments, batik work, weaving etc.

Magh Mela is organised from 23rd to 25th of February during which rural crafts and local agricultural products are exhibited.

A three-day festival is held to commemorate the foundation day of Viswa Bharati. This is known as 'Paus Mela'. The festival begins from the 7th day of Paus month of Bangla calendar. The festival opens with Rabindra Sangeet and is

Continued on page 11

Farringtons: My Boarding School Experiences

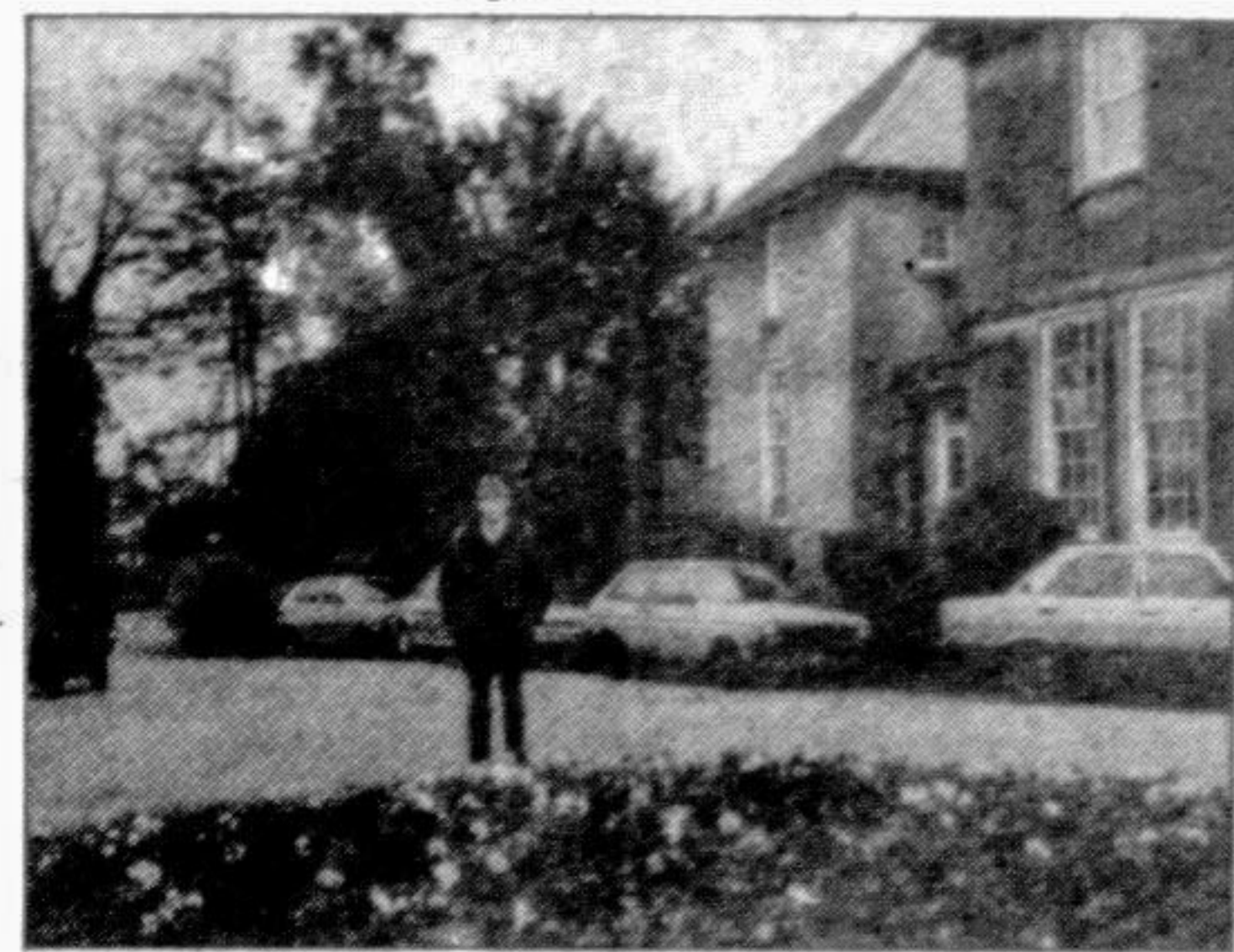
by Nadia Islam

WHEN one thinks of going away to a boarding school in a far away country, no matter how familiar the name may sound, leaving behind a dear and loved shelter, the thought is at once an alarming one. Then, as one muses in later days over the memories of diverse experiences shared with many others drawn from different societies, the exercise becomes a captivating one. In my case, as I am about to leave my dear school and boarding house in Farringtons in beautiful Kent of England, I would simply love to relive my boarding house days many a time.

Farringtons presented to me the spectacle of a neatly arranged vast garden house where students from many countries gathered under the constant vigil, efficient supervision, teaching and guidance of a very able teaching staff, not only to attain the purposes for which they were there, but also to forge strong and intimate personal bonds between them to create an international family in the real sense of the term. With six years behind me at the Farringtons, I have come to realise how valuable these bonds are and how great their strength is.

The thought that I would be leaving Farringtons soon in pursuit of higher studies elsewhere, is already painful to me. One thing is certain that wherever I go, I shall surely remain beholden to Farringtons.

I recall vividly the day I arrived at this prestigious institution located in the vast expanse of green meadows of



beautiful Kent. Its buildings, gardens, pathways, green fields bounded by tall trees at once made an impact on me. As I got to know my teachers and friends more and more, my boarding house experiences became as dear as those in my own family.

Even before I enrolled at the Farringtons, I have had opportunities to travel all over the world and meet people from a large number of countries. I believe that boarding school has given me my own opportunities. The most important being, besides my academic disciplines, learning to endear a whole world of friends and appreciate different cultures with respect.

I remember, during my junior years, being in a dorm of seven, where after 'lights out',

neighbour being the singer George Michael himself. The atmosphere of the school is an education in itself. Our revered head mistress along with the other members of staff are on constant supervision of our welfare and academic progress. These are some of the normally visible assets with which Farringtons has earned its place in the National League Tables.

Boarding school life here is full and crammed with activities. The endless theatre-trips, historical field trips, language seminars to attend, workshops to participate in, debates to arrange being the 'head' of the Debating Society, singing for the BBC radio and Westminster Cathedral being in the renowned Farringtons choir, places to visit ranging from the Houses of Parliament to the Television studios to programme for Blockbusters, Blue Peter and the one on Boarding School life, having to organise the Speech Day and various other activities for the school calendar such as inter-house and inter-school Music Festivals, drama productions and the sports day. Each term does bring with it its own speciality, such as the formal Christmas dinner where teachers and students are seated on tables according to the teachers' seniority and student's performance and position in the school. This is why the Head Girl sits by the side of the Head Mistress. This year the 'International Night' was featured in the Times newspaper and described as a polished performance of the girls from various countries in their national costumes at the Farringtons. It was a night to

one odd person snored, and a few others like myself preferred reading with our torches. Also, recalling one night, when the fire-alarm went off and people from bunk-beds fell head over heels in my dorm. There also was a certain boarding school vocabulary — the much-loved 'tuck' which was the supply to our mid-night feasts, much to the horror of our house mistresses. These 'malory towers' myths are the exclusive preserve of the young ones.

Freedom and advantages increase as one grows through the stages of a boarding school life: Some of these being separate dormitories and the common room for the privileged in which to watch the lunch-time news. The famous post-run after Chapel service



Drama: A scene from the Importance of being Earnest



At the play ground

every morning is eagerly awaited by all but only a few turn out to be the lucky ones to receive their mail and even flowers. For those who love the telephones, our personal phone booths add excitement to our boarding house life.

The teaching staff who guide us efficiently and wisely through various disciplines; the qualified medical units whose constant attention is a near-guarantee against ailments of any kind and the house mistresses whose vigil and loving care we would always cherish, form an integral part of our boarding house establishment at the Farringtons. Every morning one hears the gonging keys, foot-steps in the corridors and the inevitable happens, the dulcet tones of the two most experienced house mistresses sound 'good morning, girls'.

Most of the teaching staff including the head mistress live in comfortable dwellings within the premises of Farringtons. These also house the various school buildings — the newly-constructed sports hall which is the largest in Kent providing a wide variety of facilities such as a big swimming pool, tennis courts, a gymnasium, a weights room, and dance studios being a few of them, various other halls, auditoriums, libraries, boarding houses, science labs, art blocks, language departments, practice fields for different sporting activities, a park, a nature trail with rare birds and fishes, the ponds, fountains, and the famous

remember with our special guests being Governors of Schools and Members of Parliament bursting into a thunderous applause at the finale when we sang the Farringtons' song 'the united world'.

A few days ago I was interviewed by a journalist from the British Diplomat magazine. Amongst the many things I said in reply to his various queries, the one which seemed to have made the biggest impression on him was that here at Farringtons 'we are all a big family of the world'.

The most overwhelming day for me came when I was announced the 'head girl' of this prestigious institution which proudly recalls that it was graded several times by queen Mary. Some of my achievements in the boarding school include acquiring my bronze medal for LAMDA, passing my grade VIII piano and appearing for the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award Scheme quite apart from the grades I was required to make in my academic pursuits. It also fetches me no small satisfaction that I also participated in tennis and swimming at Kent County level. I hope these varied experiences will stand me in good stead in later years of my life.

Looking back at the years I have spent at Farringtons, I have no doubt in my mind that I had my real schooling here and gained enormously in terms of my confidence to go for a challenging discipline at the ponds, fountains, and the famous



At the canteen

The British Council Language Matters

The Intro

Today we have some more puzzles for you. There is the usual Wobbly Words puzzle and also a Wobbly Sentences

again! Again, the words in the Wobbly Words puzzle all have some link but also some very important differences. Today's Language Lab tries to explain the difference between the various words in last week's puzzle. Watch out for the explanation of this week's words in the next edition.

Wobbly Sentences

Try this exercise to help you practise the word order in questions. There are two different questions mixed up. You must sort them out, put the words in the correct order and make sure you use the punctuation marks.

please you little chance
by you you turning
would ? you fifty pounds
me radio fifty could ?
down give a your
any mind change for

Question 1
Question 2

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.

This week's language Lab

aims to answer the question in last week's Wobbly Words — what is the difference between stall, store, supermarket, shop, stand and kiosk?

Let us take them one by one.

Stall - in Britain we usually think of something like a market stall. It is like a table set up at the side of the street from which the stallholder sells their goods. It will not usually have a roof. In Bangladesh this would be, for example, the many tea stalls

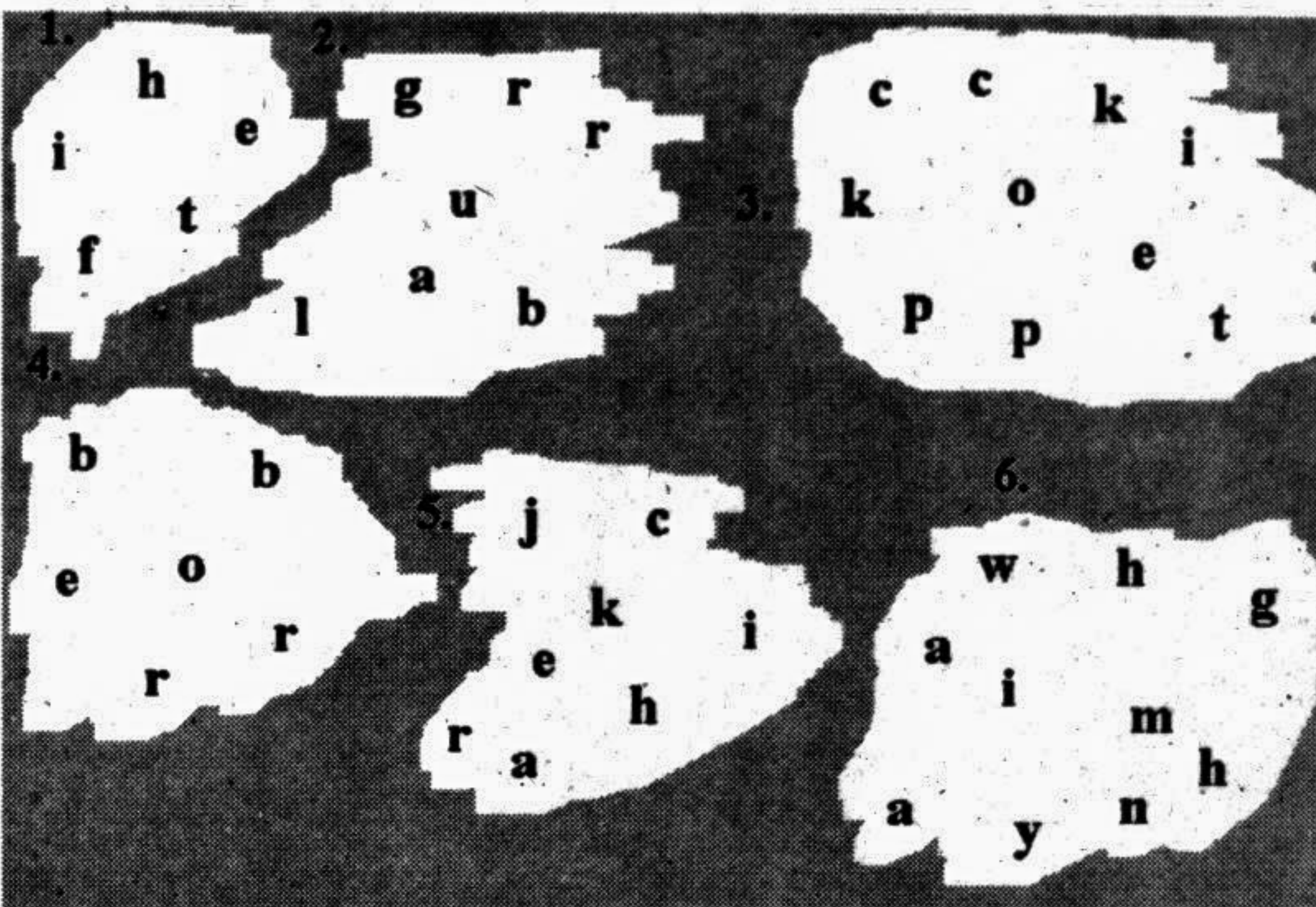
you see at the side of the road.

Store - We usually think of this as the American name for a building where goods are sold to the public. However, it is often also used in Britain in certain contexts, such as 'department store'. And there is an increasing tendency to use new words such as superstore or megastore, which really mean a very large shop!

In the Middle East you will

Wobbly Words

Try this word puzzle. In each shape the letters are jumbled up. Put them in the correct order, but be careful - some have more than one word. What do all of them have in common?



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

often see something called a Cold Store, which is usually a supermarket (but see below). **Supermarket** - This is an interesting one. The meaning of this word in Bangladesh is quite different from its meaning in Britain.

In Bangladesh it refers to a small shopping complex with many individual shops usually opening onto passages or walkways between them. It will often be on more than one floor. In Britain, however, this is a 'shopping centre'.

A supermarket in Britain is a large self-service food shop. It may sell other goods but its main business will normally be food. What sets it apart from a grocer's is the fact that it is self-service.

Shop - This is the basic word

used in Britain for a building where goods are sold to the general public. In other words it is a retail outlet. A supermarket is one type of shop, as is a greengrocer's, a baker's etc.

Stand - This word is normally used for something like a stall but in the context of trade fairs. It is often for publicity only and things are not sold. We could say for example 'I visited the Bangladeshi stand at the international trade fair last week'.

Kiosk - A kiosk is usually something more solid than a stall. You will find it at the side of the road though. It has (semi-)permanent walls, although they might only be made of wood, and it will have a roof. In Bangladesh you sometimes see newspaper

kiosks.

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.

Answers:
Wobbly Words:
1. thief 2. burglar 3. pickpocket
4. robber 5. hijacker 6. highwayman
- They are all people who steal things.
What do you think is the difference between them?
Wobbly Sentences:
The two sentences are:
Would you mind turning down your radio a little, please? and Could you give me change for fifty pounds by any chance?
Answers:
1. Would you mind turning down your radio a little, please?
2. Could you give me change for fifty pounds by any chance?

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