

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.

Mobile phone charge



The mobile phones of BTB would be in market at the end of this month. The call charge is supposed to vary in between 2 and 5 taka per minute as has been announced recently. The charge would be Tk 3 for intra-regional and Tk 5 for interregional calls at peak hours. Bangladeshis pay the highest call charge (Tk 7) in the world, though we are a poor nation!

The Parliamentary Committee on the matter has suggested that the private mobile companies decrease the call charge to Tk 5 at peak hours, and Tk 3 for special non-peak periods. Is the proposed decrease logical? How the call charge can differ so much (BTB Tk 3, others Tk 5)?

Why would not others follow the BTB? The normal call charge per minute should not be more than Tk 4 in case of any company. The BTB can also review its interregional call charge. I am not interested in the so called non-peak hour special offers. Mobile is not a gossiping machine anyway. Necessity does not know peak and non-peak hours! However, if that special case exists, the charge may be just half the normal, i.e., Tk 2 per minute.

Would the Parliamentary Committee realise this truth? What do the competing companies think? They have to do business competing with BTB - isn't it? **MAS Molla, BAAS, Dhaka**

We need another name

We call those who collaborated with the Pakistanis Dalal, Rajakar, Al-Badar, Al-Shams etc. Calling someone by these names is equivalent to calling someone by an offensive name. I think it's about time we found a nasty name to call those remnants from the partition of India era elements who still dream of living in a bigger country.

We also need a sister organisation of Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee to shame those who are ashamed of their Islamic root. How about "Deshpremheen-ornochochora-elder-mukhosh-onmochon-committee"?

Well, looks like we desperately

need to organise a nomenclature competition (first prize is Tagore's Geetanjali with English translation) to find an appropriate name.

By the way, I dare to say all these because I know no one would be able to brand me as an "anti-liberation force" - after all I am supersaturated with Bangla culture. **Shukla Mirza, Doha, Qatar**

Caretaker government

I have been following with great interest all the letters and articles on this subject and cannot refrain from adding some comments. In the world political culture, Bangladesh with a short democratic tradition

Patience and tolerance

It is imperative that the leaders and followers of the four-party alliance government and all the opposition political parties urgently cultivate the human qualities of patience and tolerance and jointly give efforts to increase further the required National Income (NI). It has been a good "Victory Day" celebration but the zeal would

redeem quickly if we cannot progress and prosper! The politicians, civil and military officials must have the patience and tolerance to see that the citizens of Bangladesh, without any interruption, resort to steady higher earnings by producing cheaper quality goods and extending more friendly ser-

vices. In Bangladesh, democracy will consolidate further by holding annual council meetings and sessions in this fair season, thus invigorating the party leadership by infusing new strength and energy in the political parties to face the national tasks ahead. **Golam Ashraf, DOHS Baridhara, Dhaka-1206**



PHOTO: STAR

has contributed something unique! It is to give constitutional shape to the concept of election under Caretaker Government. We have had three free and fair general elections within the ambit of this system and it really works. All Bangladeshis should feel proud of this achievement. The major political parties have contributed greatly to this unique system. The Jamaat was the first party to raise this issue in the JS. The AL picked it up as their main demand for street agitation and had popular support. Finally BNP made it, in 1996, a constitutional entity.

But the first beneficiary of this system was the AL which came to power in 1996 and at that time they had no complaint against it. All the catalogue of complaints from the AL cropped up after their disastrous defeat in 2001 election. They cannot face the hard truth that people did not vote for them. The time tested Caretaker Government system should remain as it is. Any move to change it will amount to inviting anarchy. It will be like opening a can of worms which one will not be able to close. But it will be worthwhile to debate whether we can bring some improvement in our Election Commission and Judiciary giving them more power. **Sakhawat Hossain, Gulshan**

Iraq situation

I can understand why people get frustrated with US policies and Bush doctrine. Personally, I do not like the Iraq war nor President Bush's hot headed policies. But the US is in Iraq and it got rid of one of the worst mass murderers of the world. American soldiers are not shooting randomly to kill civilians! Nobody should assume that American public would give a free pass for that kind of activity. That is not American! Mr. Rahman should know that the US has a very strong independent justice system. I can understand when some soldiers overreact and

kill civilians. But that is part of the war psychology. And, those soldiers are being prosecuted! American families would love to see their soldiers come home as soon as possible. But nobody wants to see another Afghanistan in Iraq. **Dev, Boston**

Americans in Iraq

The outcry against recent Fallujah bloodbath has reverberated far beyond Iraq's border. Innocent Iraqis are being blown out indiscriminately which is a common phenomenon there. At the same time, optimism envisioned that a

sion, anathema to its neighbour, pugnacious pre-emptive attack on Iraq, inhumane torturing of the prisoners incarcerated in Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay, resulting in simmering anti-Americanism in Muslim countries trifled with by the western media.

Not so long ago, people looked up to a liberal America and now they abhor its foreign policies. Why? Causes are not esoteric. The indiscriminately belligerent outlook of the war on terror is contributing to terrorist ideology. The overall situation is exacerbating and innocent people are falling victim to it. Pull your troops out of Iraq handing over

Indian visa

This is a special request to the Indian High Commissioner H E Veena Sikri. Please ease the misery of Visa Seekers, both male and female, who stand in queue for hours together in adverse weather conditions.

Other High Commissions and Embassies have made conditions good enough for visa seekers. So there is no reason why the Indian High Commission cannot do the same. **Mushtaque Ahmad, Uttara, Dhaka**

more experienced US president would justify himself to the nations in his second term is drifting away due to his adoption of abrasively belligerent policies and sabre-rattling over Iran. The purported war on terror bumped off thousands in Afghanistan but is yet to hunt out Bin Laden who resuscitates abruptly and surprisingly. Certainly, he is the happiest man with the Bush victory; even so fundamentalists collide with each other, they are best cronies in fact. Now-a-days, America is loudly preaching democratisation of Middle East. What will happen if any country pokes its nose into any matter in America? Besides, the US supports marauding Israeli aggres-

complete sovereignty to the country; tame Israel and dissolve Palestine-Israel conflict by giving back Palestine the land and sovereignty. **Nasir Uddin Roney, Dept. Of Anthropology, University of Chittagong**

Rab

The newly created elite force Rab nabbed so many hardcore criminals and terrorists and ultimately killed them in crossfire (?). Everyday many writings are published for and against Rab activities. We know that our prime minister as well as home minister gave clear directives to nab the so-called Bangla Bhai who created a reign of terror in greater Rajshahi. However, we did not find any initiatives taken by Rab to nab this infamous terrorist.

We are very much interested in seeing a real peaceful and secured motherland for its sustainable development. **M.S. Uddin, Postdoc Fellow**

No more blood, I want to live

Leaders are asking for more blood. We already have given enough blood, during and after the big sacrifice. Despite that we did not get expected actions from them. A country transformed into a modern and prosperous nation within twenty two years (Malaysia), still we are talking our past not our tomorrows. The leaders are given unprecedented authority to rule the country and rule their parties single-handedly. In return what they have taken is overwhelming. Nation remembers their house renovation bills, laundry bills, dog, cat rearing bills, landscaping costs. Each item could have transformed a sleeping village into a dynamic growth centre. The bullet proof world best vehicles, exclusive and lavish frequent foreign trips, secured luxury villas. In return they put us as a nation in the house of disgrace.

A secured life for close relatives, uncountable wealth for their next keens and power unmatched with any other leaders in their positions. In return their men terrorise us. Again they are asking for more blood to cover their shameful failures. While they are unable to talk with ingenuity, they gobbled up all the 'fruits and coconuts' offered to them, produced horrifying results and perhaps now terrified with the outcome, they are requesting for more blood. We have got to stop their outrageous behaviour and meaningless thinking. **MM Haque, Jeddah, K.S.A**

DU convocation

It's a privilege and great honour for a student either in graduate or post-graduate level to be able to participate in a convocation, for a Bangladeshi student the third convocation after liberation is certainly an added advantage. It takes years for the authorities to arrange one and by the time one forgets that there will be one, the former student gets to hear about the convocation (of course lucky are the fresh graduates). Getting a diploma from the institute is thrilling and exciting for the degree holder. And when you feel that you're truly seeing the favourite leader of the current times Dr. Mahathir Mohamad delivering a wonderful

Cricket

Cricket is a universal language and a Trans-frontier peace treaty. But in our country it is only an expensive game. The team is absorbing embarrassing defeats by all teams at the expense of tax-payers' money. Blame the selector or coach or not, most would agree our players have neither the talent nor the skills to play this game.

We cannot be funny with this issue Bangladesh must stop playing cricket in international level before they are ready and tough enough for such a game. **Nayem Islam, The Aga Khan School, Uttara, Dhaka**

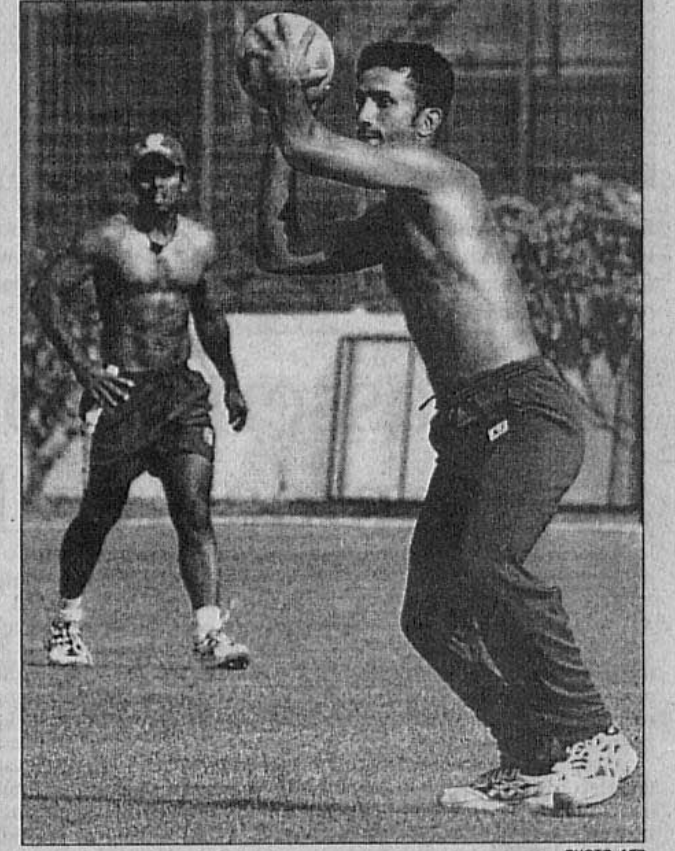


PHOTO: AFP

Correct pronunciation

There is a serious need for raising consciousness in our country to pronounce words and letters properly as far as possible. My observation is that most people do not even realise that they are incorrect. I have noticed that if and when the mistakes are pointed out, they eagerly become alert and try to rectify it.

We are lucky that being Bengalees, the wide range of alphabets in Bangla allow us to be able to pronounce almost all the sounds required in the main international languages. I have noticed that phonetics is very important in any language. A certain word, if mispronounced, can mean a totally different thing altogether. e.g. in Chittagonian "uunli" means dried fish (shutki maach) and "uunli" means head (shunaychi).

In urdu, "kabr" means grave and "khhabr" means news. Pronouncing "stretch" as "stress" will make a serious difference in the meaning of a sentence. In Bengali we often pronounce the words phul, phawl as FOOL, many different languages.

Conscious effort should be made by all educational institutions to raise awareness about this very common error which can so easily be rectified. **Swatee Majid, Dhaka**

Abused freedom of speech

I am writing this with concern and a note for a politician who reportedly slayed a former president, who according to him, was not maintaining his status and not playing a role befitting a past president of the Republic.

weak country. What is most striking though is that the leaders in our country are not doing anything to rectify these problems. Most policies are not transparent and even if they are, they are never reviewed by people with expertise in that field. I honestly believe if people in Bangladesh had the freedom of speech and could criticise certain aspects of our leaders' policies or actions creatively, then these leaders would benefit and so would the country. I also believe that The Daily Star, the leading English daily in the country, can make a difference. I believe if the newspaper gives people the opportunity to look at the policies or even the political actions of our



Foreigners in ancient India

The Centre of Advanced Study in Ancient Indian History and Culture, University of Calcutta organised, a few years ago, a seminar on Foreigners in Ancient India and Lakshmi and Saraswati in Art and Literature. Its director was Prof D C Sircar, then Carmichael Professor and head of the department of ancient history and culture, University of Calcutta. Choosing such a theme was unthinkable during the NDA regime. The minister of human resource development, Dr Muri Manohar Joshi might have directed the University Grants Commission to slash funding to the CU, without caring for the high esteem Prof Sircar used to be held in by historians internationally.

Foreigners in the Ajanta Paintings by Prof M K Dhavalikar of Deccan College, Poona University, was an important paper. The paintings of the Vakataka Gupta age depict, in several panels, men and women who, from their physiognomy and dress, appear to be of foreign origin. Sometimes we find them in the palace employed as royal bodyguards and chambermaids or as merchants offering presents to Indian Kings. They also appear as pious devotees listening, with rapt attention, to the sermon of the 'Enlightened One' or engrossed in dalliance with their companions. There should be little doubt that these foreigners were there in India during the age, or else it would not have

been possible for the master-artists of Ajanta to portray them so realistically in the paintings", Dhavalikar stated. The Poona-based historian referred to the pace-setting research of Ralph and Grisley as also of Raja Rajendralal Mitra who established strongly that beef-eating was quite common in ancient India.

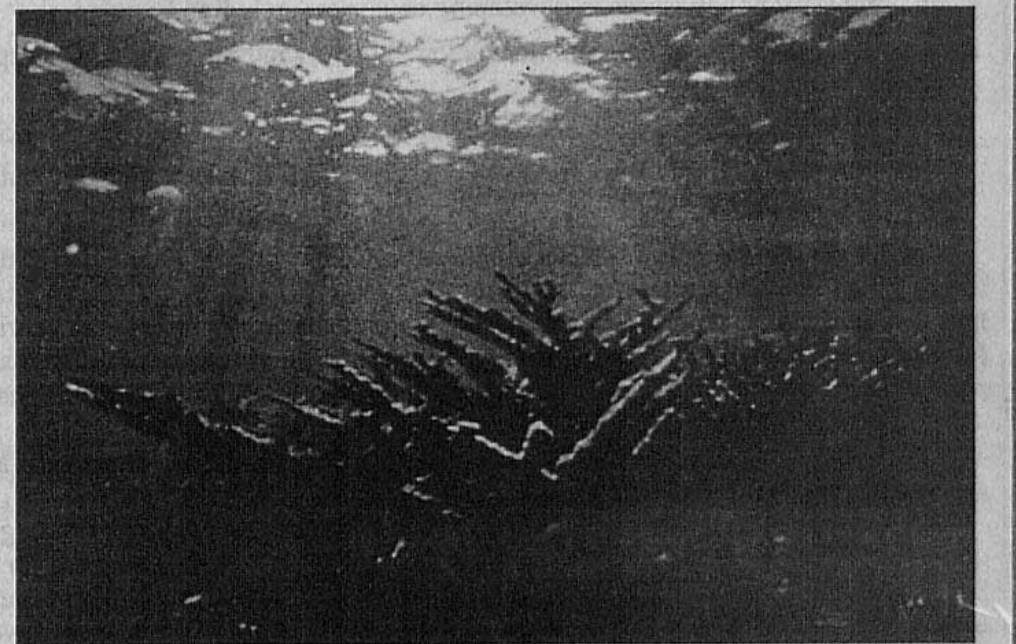
All shall give and take, mingle and be mingled in, none shall depart dejected from the shore of the sea of Bharata's "Great Humanity"! Small wonder, the BJP leaders - let alone the hardcore RSS elements - do not refer to Tagore, his poems and essays.

Sankar Ray, Golf Green Urban Complex, Kolkata 700 095

Coral reefs

I venture to voice my views on coral reefs. The coral reefs are in peril. Twenty percent coral reefs of the world have been effectively destroyed and show no immediate hope of recovery. Another 24 percent are under looming risk of subsides in the course of human pressures and a further 26 percent are under a longer-term peril of collapse. These are only some of the conclusions of a comprehensive new report by 240 scientists in 98 countries, working under the help of the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network. Coral reefs, in addition to being breathtakingly beautiful, are among the embraces of life on Earth and breeding ground of biodiversity vital to supporting oceanic health. But an amalgamation of global warming, litter, over fishing, diseases, toxic waste, effluents and other factors is destroying the reefs world-wide. It is mentioned in the report that Australian and Pacific reefs remain relatively healthy, but devastating declines have taken place elsewhere, including the Caribbean region, where coral cover on many reefs has declined by up to 80 percent. Reefs of the Bay of Bengal have also declined slowly. If the world community doesn't do something soon, it will be too late for many reefs to recover. The terrible threat to the world's oceans is barely a surprise, and it isn't limited to coral reefs only. A new report gave an account of the grave ecological conditions of America's coastal waters. People are using the oceans in a fashion that can't be continued.

Mohammad Ali Akanda, Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh



FALL whereas in our alphabet we do not have ANY letters to be pronounced that way. To pronounce PAW and PHAW, both our lips need to be used, whereas to pronounce F, our top set of teeth and lower lip is needed.

In English on the other hand, Phaw does not exist. Unconscious of this fact, we tend to pronounce the English words FOOL and FALL as phuul, and phawll!

All one needs to do is just be constantly alert and conscious about the different sounds around us. With the cable TV nowadays, one has easy access to the channels with

I am sorry to regret that the politician by his utterance disgraced the freedom of speech! **AF Rahman, One-mail**

Play a proactive role

I think the DS is the most progressive English daily in Bangladesh. I currently reside in the US and like most of the Bangladeshis abroad are very anxious about the future of our country. The deterioration of human rights situation, the economy, the growth of terrorism and fundamentalism and above all corruption make Bangladesh a very

leaders and comment on them, something would come out. Also, it would be an opportunity for many Bangladeshis like us who would love their ideas to be conveyed to the leaders of the country. What I am suggesting is a section in your daily, (maybe once a week) dedicated to these "liberal minded" Bangladeshis who want good for the country. I would love to write for The Daily Star and love to create opportunities for fellow Bangladeshis living abroad. **Ananta Neelam, US**