

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 BTTB 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 (BTTB Tk 3, others Tk 5)?

We need another name

We call those who collaborated with the Pakistanis Dalal, Rajakar, Al-Badr, 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 "Despremheen-bornochora-dader-mukhosh-oonmochon-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

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 tomorrow. 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 raring 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 keeps 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 shameless failures. While they are unable to talk with ingenuity, they gobble 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



PHOTO: STAR

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 international level before they are ready and tough enough for such a game.

Nayeem Islam, The Aga Khan School, Uttara, Dhaka

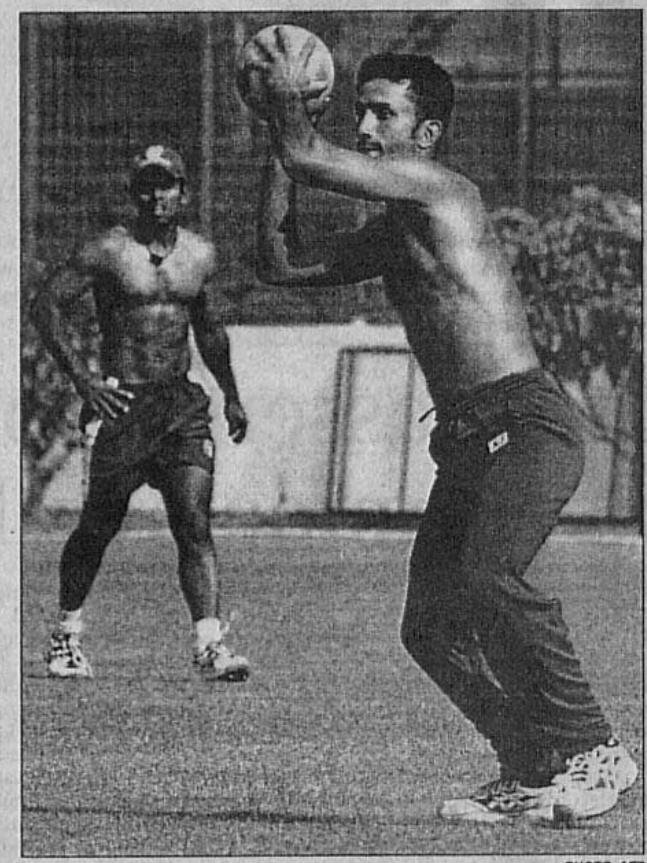


PHOTO: AFP

many different languages.

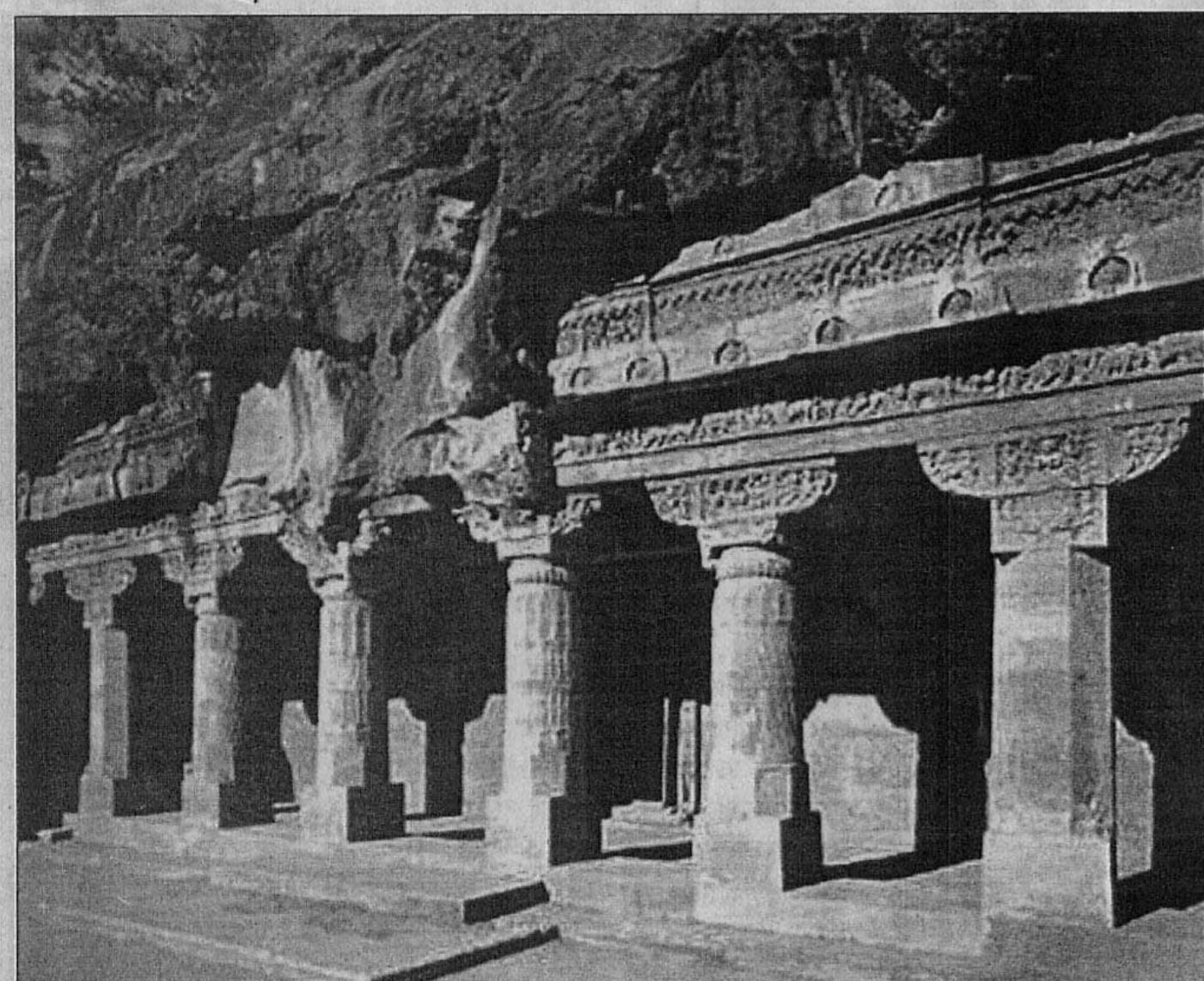
Conscious effort should be made by all educational institutions to raise awareness about this very common error which can so easily be rectified.

Swatee Majid
Dhaka

Abused freedom of speech

I am writing this with concern and a note for a politician who reportedly slated 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 Murli 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 Rajendra Lal Mitra who established strongly that beef-eating was quite common in ancient India.

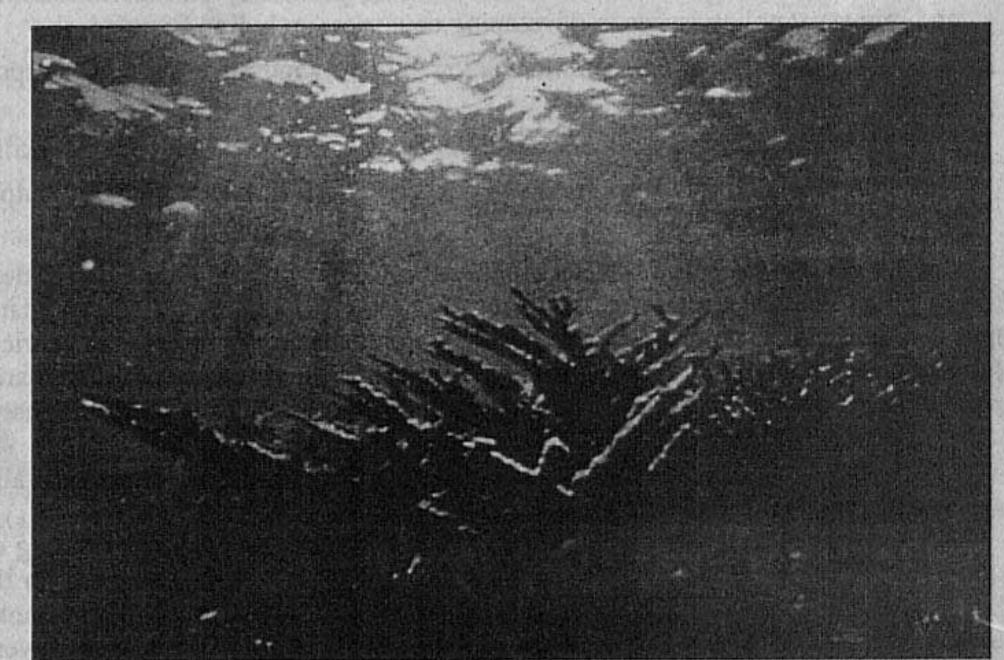
All shall give and take, mingle and be mingled in, none shall depart departed from the shore of the sea of Bharata's "Great Humanity"! Small wonder, the BJP leaders- let alone the hardcore RSS elements - do not refer to Tagore, his poems and essays.

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 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, tides, 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



I am sorry to regret that the politician by his utterance disgraced the freedom of speech!!

AF Rahman, One e-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 like to write to create opportunities for fellow Bangladeshis living abroad.

Ananta Neelam
US