

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.

William Carey

William Carey was one of the scholars who helped the Bengali language and literature to become identifiable and thoroughly developed. Surprisingly, with the persistent effort of that foreigner early major textbooks in Bengali language were composed in large numbers. The nobleman, Carey, was born on August 17, 1761 in Paulerspury, a village in England. Since his teenage he was in quest for spiritual truth and he took Bible to his heart and decided to be a Baptist missionary. He arrived in India in 1793. He learnt different languages such as Hindi, Gujarati, Tamil, Telegu, Marathi, Bengali and Shanskrit. Besides, preaching messages from Bible, he was appointed as professor of



language at the Fort William College on May 04, 1801. Then he started writing textbooks in Bangla. It was he who composed the first textbook on Bengali grammar.

We are indebted to Mr. Carey.
Rubab Abdullah
Residential Area Dhaka Cantonment

Bangabandhu's elder sister

On 15 August 1975, Begum Asia Khatun witnessed the assassination of her son Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni and her daughter-in-law Mrs. Arzoo Moni. On that 'black' day of Bangladeshi politics, she not only lost her son, but along with 15 members of her family she lost her younger brother Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Now after three decades she died with the same pain with which she lived. This is because, while she was in her 'death-bed' her second son Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim was not allowed to see her as he was in prison. Sheikh Selim was finally released for a few hours just to see his mother's dead body and attend the burial.

As her grandson I do not know what this nation has given her, but I can state that this nation has definitely taken a lot away from her. Even in her late 80s, my grand mother Begum Asia Khatun remembered every bullet that was shot on that night (15 August 1975). She perfectly recalled the dying words of her son and her daughter-in-law, and her only wish was to see the conspirators of 15 August being brought to justice. Yet, she died in vain without witnessing the punish-

ment of the conspirators who assassinated so many members of her family.

I have never seen anyone living with so much pain as my grandmother lived with. However, no matter whatever the political turmoil her family is or was suffering from she remained bold and upright. Her personality reflected dignity and motherly affection. To the Awami League veterans of 1971 and 1975, she was a 'motherly' figure. This was reflected in the condolence message of AL presidium member Tofail Ahmed. Her departure is unbearable to those who knew her.

Hence, while bearing all the agony associated with her passing, I pray for the salvation of her soul, and humbly request others to do so.

Ashikur Rahman
Her Grandson

Crime must pay!

It's a matter of great regret that ministers /political leaders were involved in such widespread corruption. Several reports have been published against them in various nationals dailies regarding cases of extortion, illegal arms possession, bribery and so on. But the sad truth is that none of these great leaders were involved in any kind of

benevolent activities. The law enforcers should chase the criminals who have gone into hiding. Crime must pay!

Venus Rebeiro
Ex-teacher of English Medium School, Farmgate, Dhaka

Quacks and fake healers

You must have noticed that every day there are advertisements in our daily newspapers of some spiritual and traditional medicines promising to cure some very complicated diseases, infertility, conjugal disputes, failure in business, failure in love etc. The titles of these ads, if you please notice, are very lucrative to the people in physical or mental distress.

I seldom find any incisive report by our journalists who seem to be more interested in political developments for obvious reasons. But unscrupulous people who are making money at the cost of others should be brought to full public glare through reporting.

I request the government agencies concerned to take stern action against the fake healers and save millions of innocent people from being cheated. The government as well as the journalists should chalk out programmes and publish in-depth reports to raise awareness among the general populace.

I also question the legal and moral right of the newspapers and weeklies as they print the advertisements only for making money at the expense of general people.

Dr. M M Mortayez Amin
MBBS, MPhil, MMed (UK) Consultant, Labaid Fertility Centre Labaid Specialized Hospital

Making peace

Dr Martin Luther King Jr is known all over the world. About peace he said, "Many men cry peace! peace! But they refuse to do the things that make peace." From the above it is clear that peace will only prevail in any country when those things which are needed for peace are put into work. We also cried for peace in the recent past, doing everything against it! Now it is time to work for real peace.

Let us see what deprived us of peace. These are faulty voter

list, demand for Voter ID card, National ID card & EC reform, fair election etc. Let us now see how far we have progressed. Anew EC has been constituted to the satisfaction of all political parties & people at large. Persons constituting the commission are capable of handling the situation they are facing. Their main tasks are preparation of a faultless voter list, Voter ID card, National ID card with fingerprint etc. They have already started working. Necessary equipments will have to be imported and that will require sufficient time.

Let us remind those who want hasty solutions that the nation should be guided by pragmatic and rational principles, or else we will be deprived of the desired results. Let them work as they are doing without fear or favour. Any hasty action may spoil the whole thing. Patience and patience alone can give us the peace which is within our sight. Let our well wishers know that the people of Bangladesh are happy with the government which is on the right track.

We have hundreds of authors, thinkers, poets, philosophers, scholars and politicians in the country who can render invaluable service to the nation. I finish with a saying of Abraham Lincoln: "I do not think much for a man who is not wiser today than he was yesterday." So we will advice our politicians to give a better account of themselves in the days ahead.

M.A. Alim
Ex-Banker Indira Road, Dhaka

Two Begums

They have successfully baffled this nation to become "Jana Netri and "Desh Netri, instead of being hated.

As Jano Netri and Desh Netri, the people and the country should have been more valuable to them than their lives. But what they have done to the people and the country could probably not be done by the most unscrupulous enemy!

Molla A. Latif
Kapasia, Gazipur

Circuit house

I am not aware of the rationale behind the nomenclature. This supposedly is the official government guest house at the district level. The purpose of these guest houses is to provide the high government officials with good accommodation and food during their supervisory trip at the district level. The conference room of the circuit house is also used to hold government meetings as well as socio-cultural events.

Of late, the supervision of the government officials has increased manifold. The two-seated eight rooms are not adequate for the purpose. Moreover, often the rooms are occupied for months by government officials on transfer, thus increasing the demand. Surprisingly, officials from NGOs and international agencies are also found occupying the rooms depriving the govt. officials. Two rooms are always kept reserved for the VIPs. It is interesting to note that the top dignitaries rarely spend night outside the capital. As a result, these rooms are always found vacant throughout the year. The room rent per night is only BDT 16. One wonders how it is possible to maintain general cleanliness when an ordinary bath soap cost BDT 12.

Meanwhile, the service at the circuit house has greatly deteriorated. Security is totally lacking. The story is different with the arrival of the VIPs. It appears that the caretaker's only duty is to identify the guests and then open the room. The circuit house staffs are not properly dressed. Most of the time they are found in lungi and pyjama. The general cleanliness is lacking. The beds and the mosquito nets are dirty. Cockroaches frequent the wardrobe. The toilets are dirty and run out of water. The catering services are usually not found in most of the circuit houses. However, the story is different with bakshish. The gardens and the environment deserve more attention. Interestingly there is no dearth of staff.

In order to provide accommodation for more govt. officials, an additional floor should be constructed initially in the greater 21 districts. The room rent should also be increased immediately. The government guest houses should no longer be allowed to be subsidized and the maintenance cost should be realized from the guests. It would also be befitting to change the name of the circuit house and officially name it as Government Guest House. The authorities concerned are requested to look into the matter seriously.

Shamim Ahmed
On e-mail

Power plant

Bibiya gas field is one of the largest gas fields located near the river Kushiara in the district of Habigonj. The gas field is likely to produce nearly 600mmcf of gas within a year or two. The time is ripe

to think of setting up a high capacity power generation plant within close proximity of Bibiyana gas field. Gas, water resources and land are the first and foremost requirements to establish a power generation plant.

The high volume of gas produced in greater Sylhet region is not easy to transport to other regions of the country due to inadequate pipeline capacity. It appears to be wise to produce electricity from a nearby location of Bibiyana gas field and tie up with overhead national grid power line, instead of laying fresh pipelines to transmit gas from greater Sylhet to other regions. A high volume of gas can be consumed in the power plant with uninterrupted supply of gas.

Every day our requirements for power is increasing and we need to be prepared to ensure power supply in the years to come. In order to minimize expenditure, we need to develop a few large power generation sources, instead of too many small power plants. Bibiyana based power plant can possibly be one of the major sources of power supply.

Newaz Noor-ul Wahab
Housing Estate, Sylhet

Nuclear power for energy

It is a matter of great pleasure that the international agency concerned has given us the green signal for building a nuclear reactor. It is indeed a necessity for us to have adequate power supply to meet the growing needs of the country.

Bangladesh, as an emerging developing country with a huge manpower, is in acute need of electricity. And the solution lies in generating electricity from nuclear plants.

Rafique Islam Rime
Lecturer, Department of English Premier University

Contain communalism

Most of us have been observing the activities of the caretaker government with anxiety, keen as we are to see a clean-up of our country's polluted politics and corrupt institutions. We have, by and large, been impressed by the sincerity and speed at which the CTG has progressed in this regard.

One major issue that remains to be addressed (which has not been dealt with by the CTG so far) is institutionalised communalism. We all know that several individuals and even political parties have used superficial differences (that do not surface between us at the common level) to try and create divisions to divert attention from their misdeeds.

In particular, two major items exist that would be easy to address and go a long way in rekindling the spirit of unity. Firstly, repeal of the Vested Property Act, which is a black law that many of those currently under investigation for corruption have abused in order to build up huge personal property and wealth at the expense of thousands of minority families. Secondly, rebuilding the Ramna Kali Mandir, demolished by the Pakistan Army in March 1971, and returning the land on which the temple stood to the trust which still has a legal mandate to manage the property. If we are sincere about establishing rule of law and eradicating corruption, these are two actions that could go a long way in demonstrating that.

Sanjoy Kumar Nath
Chittagong

No rickshaws!

Recently the government issued a directive that bans movement of rickshaws on the roads from Badda to Gulshan and Gulshan to Mohakhali. I would like to point out that it has become extremely difficult for us to move on those roads in the absence of rickshaws.

It seems that the idea of better traffic management has blurred the vision of the decision makers so much that they do not any longer think about common people like us.

Raihana Rahman
On e-mail

CTG's performance

The BBC Bengali Service recently focused on the political impasse the country is passing through now. The most significant part of it was the brief analysis of the situation presented by veteran journalist Ataus Samad.

He has raised two fundamental questions such as: the unclear and unplanned working strategy of the EC; and, the objective and the strategy of the CTG regarding political reforms including reforms in the parties and holding the promised national election in 2008.

One cannot deny that honest people in politics are now a rarity in Bangladesh. If one can identify and pave the way for them to be elected representatives, that would be an ideal situation. Can it be achieved within a short time? The answer is "no". We will have to take long term measures under a democratic frame work.



Police reform

I refer to various letters published on this issue. It is necessary to recognise that the role and responsibility of the police is central to law and order and for a corruption free society. The judges may pass sentences but it is the police who apprehend the criminals and enforce the law. For instance, an arrest order against a criminal remains

inactive if the police say (whether after taking bribe or not) the person is untraceable and cannot be caught.

Rule of law in society depends in the first instance on the threat of being caught for unlawful acts and that is why the role of the police is so crucial. There must be sufficient state remuneration for the police personnel, with

subsidized housing and rations and other benefits like schooling of children, medical allowance etc.

Their recruitment and career development should be based on proper assessment of competence and honesty.

Engineer Shafi Ahmed
London, UK

The people are still holding their faith in this government. We expect them to be successful in their mission. The respected Chief Adviser should consider addressing the nation on the progress of work made by the EC towards a national election in 2008, and the expectation of the government on political reforms by the parties. Has the government drawn up any bottom line on this issue? We have already heard an Honourable Adviser speaking on the issue of reform, but a little more articulation and clarity would be useful for public understanding. We definitely understand the complexity of the issue, yet a good sense of direction will pave the way for political reforms, election and democracy in Bangladesh.

Areader
On e-mail

Foreign and native rulers

I read the article in your PCP page entitled "The Battle of Palashi" by Mr. Faruque Hasan with great interest. While the article is indeed very interesting and does come across as thorough and well researched, I nevertheless have a fundamental problem with the basic premise and the final conclusion of the article which states that: "That battle was fought for forceful transfer of proprietary right over Bengal, from one foreign ruler to another foreign ruler."

If we can set aside the modern day concept of "citizenship" and "nation-state" for the time being, since these notions did not exist

during the time of Nawab Sirajuddaula, we can attempt an answer to the basic question: Who is a "foreign ruler" and who is a "native ruler"?

As a "community", the British rulers/administrators (whether the East India Company or subsequently the British establishment under the Queen) could not or did not make the Indian subcontinent (or South Asia if you like), their own. Apart from a very few notable exceptions, the British establishment on the whole did not emotionally, culturally, spiritually identify themselves with the land and the people they ruled. They came, ruled and left as foreigners. Of course no one denies that they did leave behind a great legacy. Still they were foreigners.

On the other hand, other than the early Muslim invaders, the Muslim rulers in general particularly the Mughals, came as foreigners, but subsequently identified themselves with the land, adopted the land as their home and completely integrated themselves with the land, its people and culture. These rulers did not go back, and while they ruled they never saw themselves as "foreign rulers", neither did they see their subjects a "foreign subjects". Also there is no evidence that the general masses on the whole whether Hindus or Muslims, perceived the Muslim rulers as "foreign rulers". By the time Nawab Sirajuddaula appeared on the scene, the Muslim rulers of South Asia had become "organic" to the land they had become an integral

part of the land its population, culture and ethos and as a result had already helped re-shape and enrich the very identity and character of South Asia and its people.

Since ages, South Asia has welcomed, sheltered, fostered and "become home" to people from all regions of the world, of all races, cultures, religions and faiths. And all those who came, (save the British), particularly the Muslim rulers, eventually made the sub-continent their home and contributed to making a South Asian society and culture as fascinatingly rich, diverse, evolved, alive and vibrant as we see today.

The semantic is very important here. To make the definitions of "foreign" or "native" contingent on "racial features", I am afraid is pretty misleading.

Largely, the Muslim rulers were "native" or "of the soil" in every sense, while the British rulers were "foreign" in every sense.

Therefore:
- In my view, it is fallacious to conclude that Nawab Sirajuddaula was a "foreign ruler" just because "racially" his origin was Arab-Turk.

- To say that Nawab Sirajuddaula was as much a foreign ruler as was Lord Clive, is a travesty of sort, at least in my perspective and limited scholarship.

My personal views notwithstanding, I congratulate The Daily Star and Faruque Hasan for a very interesting and thought provoking article

Shumon Sengupta
Gulshan, Dhaka

Noise pollution

I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the law enforcers for imposing regulations ensuring certain streets of the cosmopolitan city of ours as "Horn Free Zones". However, it is necessary to consider that mere

announcement of rules and regulations does not confirm proper enforcement of those rules.

I travel from Gulshan to Uttara every morning, and I have noticed that cars, and especially buses, are absolutely indifferent to this rule.

The authorities concerned should immediately address the issue.

Azra Azad
Gulshan, Dhaka



Tigers tranquilised?



The Tigers are continuing their lacklustre performance in Sri Lanka. The batsmen are helpless against top class bowling as usual. How far has Bangladesh cricket progressed in seven years of Test cricket?

Moreover, veterans like Rafique and Bashara are

showing a lack of grip on the game. The Grameen Phone Pacer Hunt should be extended to include talented leg-spinners as this department is vacant in the team.

A new era in Bangladesh cricket has started under the stewardship of ace batsman Ashraful. While his appoint-

ment was a right decision, he still has a lot to prove. We can only hope that things will soon improve.

Ananya Das
A level Student

Cephalon International