

## River erosion and water logging

Firstly, I would express my solidarity with the writers and thank them for their concern about such issues. Unlike the developed countries, these are the havocs intensifying day by day in the developing countries like

Bangladesh. If we go back, we can see that river erosion and water logging are natural processes. And the processes had been going through almost in a balanced way till the beginning of modern civilisation. It is nothing but the human activities e.g. living in floodplains, interrupting natural water courses, deforestation, urbanisation etc. that

have triggered regular river erosion and frequent water logging. It is certain that these will affect other environmental issues as well as agricultural productivity. The first phase of this vicious circle has already started.

Measures must be taken by all immediately for the sustainability of nature.

Of course, the government should do the bulk of the job.

**Md. Aynul Kabir**

*PhD student*

*School of Applied Sciences and Engineering  
Monash University, Australia*



SALIM MAHFUZ / DRINKNEWS

### Admission in college

The results of the SSC exams were published recently. The students and their guardians were very happy. But now parents as well as students are worried about admission in college.

The decision makers have to address the issue in right earnest, as many students will find it difficult to get admission in college this year.

**Md. Faisal Bin Karim**  
*Dept. of Pharmacy  
Jahangirnagar University  
Savar, Dhaka*

### "Can Bangladesh make it alone?"

I take this opportunity to thank you very much for publishing my write-up on assessing the realities of our country's maiden journey into the world of international shipbuilding & heavy engineering under the aforementioned title (Forum).

Our combined effort will only be fruitful if our policy-makers in the government give its contents some serious thoughts and adopt a realistic approach to utilise this unique opportunity of adding a new but long term growth engine to our export basket.

**Mahboob Ahmed, On e-mail**

### Realise the truth

Before 1/11, the four-party alliance was all set to participate in the 22/1 election. The AL led 14-party coalition was forced to remain away from it. But the BNP led alliance was ready to take over as a one-sided election was going to be held where they couldn't lose! But things are different now.

I'm sure the politicians have realised that they have to change themselves.

**Borhan Ahmed Sojib**

*Dept. of BBA  
International Islamic University  
Chittagong*

### Measuring credit worthiness

Credit is a necessary component in all sectors of commerce and industry. Inefficient use of credit is one of the main causes of poor credit management. In these continuously changing sectors of trade, commerce & industry, it is very much important to ensure availability of credit. In a country like Bangladesh it is more important to increase credit availability to build SMEs, which play a vital role in economic development.

**Abdul Majid Khan (Titu)**  
*Executive- Credit Control  
Department  
Finance Division  
TM International (BD) Ltd.  
(AKTEL)  
Agrabad, Chittagong*

### Problems of SAU

The Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University (SAU) is located in the heart of the capital city. It started officially in 2001. In fact, the SAU has come into being through the upgrading of Bangladesh Agricultural Institute (BAI) which was established on December 11, 1938 as "The Bengal Agricultural Institute" by Sher-e-Bangla A. K. Fazlul Huq, the then chief minister of undivided Bengal, which later became "East Pakistan Agricultural Institute". Regrettably, the teachers and the students of SAU are facing many problems due to lack of some required facilities.

The authorities concerned should look into the matter.  
**S. P. Chakma (Xenon)**  
*SAU, Dhaka*

### Sense of humour

The Bengalee sense of humour is much older than that of the now materialistically-developed Western civilization (classical knowledge and wisdom travelled from the East to the West; now in the 21st century there is reversal of

the sine wave: relocation from the West back to the East). Now both the West and the East have to meet and live together, in this squeezed global village. In the hot tropics, BO (body odour) is present in epidemic form; hence the daily bath--we have to patronise our 300-plus rivers! A land overflowing with the bounties of Nature--don't blame the Begums.

There is a keen sense of wit, humour, satire, irony in our politics, which baffle the distinguished foreign analysts. It is more, and deeper, than the antics of the two Honourable Begums, who had been playing "ludo" with our fate. The hot question being asked today everywhere is why do we put up with the sort of third class political governance, where the systems losses are very high, and corrupt practices are encouraged or overlooked?

We have a soft golden heart. The brain shines in pure white (some think in black using grey matter), but we are rather ruled by the heart than by the head. Too soft inside, with a great deal of tolerance, and ability to absorb misdeeds.

This casualness in disciplined life-style is not working in today's fast global village--the IT bug. Nothing can be kept secret. The era of the flowing saree, dhoti, and jowar bhata is gone (note the chador, alwan on wintry nights). The younger people are seen in tight jeans and T-shirts.

We are not nationalistic enough? What about the Language Movement sacrifices, compelling the UN to announce the Mother Language Day on Feb. 21?

Luckily, now we are aware of our international shortcomings. We have brought in an incisive caretaker government, to tie up the loose ends. There is leakage when there are overflows--it shows our generosity, perhaps.

**Alif Zabr**  
*One-mail*

### Biman's irresponsible act

I was one of the passengers of Biman's DC10, Flight No. BG 022 which was coming from Muscat via Chittagong on July 3, 2008.

I boarded the plane from Chittagong and the departure was 30 minutes late. When the plane landed at ZIA, it stood still not taking towards the terminal. We inquired about the situation and was informed that two wheels of the aircraft had been damaged and that we were required to wait for a while. But we had to wait for more than 30 minutes before the mobile stairs came and we climbed down to get in a bus to go to the terminal.

I came to know that out of the twelve wheels of the aircraft, six wheels were completely destroyed and four others were partially damaged! The 'anti-skid' system of the aircraft had not been working properly and the brake was not fully functional, so the pilot had to apply hard brakes, as a result heat was generated and the effect destroyed the wheels.

It has been disclosed that the president of Bangladesh Airlines Pilots' Association said that some of the pilots who operated the aircraft had filed complaint with the authorities concerned in this regard. I learned that the captain, who was piloting this flight, on landing at Shah Amanat International Airport in Chittagong, reported that the aircraft had developed some problems, but the authorities concerned gave the clearance to take off.

I am outraged by this news. Why did the authorities give permission when the aircraft was not fully functional? An accident could have taken place and the lives of many passengers were at risk.

The Almighty showed His infinite mercy and saved us.  
**A passenger of BG022**  
*One-mail*

### CTG's U-turn?

Though this caretaker govt. is not an elected one but it got the silent support of the majority. The start was very good. It began to materialise the dreams of people by revealing the corruption of our patriotic (?) elected leaders. Not only that, it compelled those 'golden sons' & daughters to confess to their guilt and go to jail thereafter. The common people didn't say anything against it, rather they appreciated it. It made us believe that no criminal would go unpunished.

Then what has happened to the CTG now? Why is it trying to compromise with those corrupt people? Why is this U-turn? What is the govt's weakness?  
**Jesmin Akhtar**  
*Dhanmondi*

### Why bring in the Mughal ruler?

Shaista Khan was a general cum governor of Bengal during the Mughal period. We know about his military adventures and good governance. It is said that the price of 8 maunds of rice was only Tk 1 during his rule! Perhaps, it was not that good news for rice growers. But people in general were happy. But there is no mention in the history that he had any liking for lighter side of life, like jokes etc.

Our finance adviser has informed the people that he cannot bring down the prices to Shaista Khan's level. People remembered the benevolent ruler but failed to understand his relevancy to the present state of affairs. At last, the adviser admitted that it was only a joke, nothing serious. We got relieved. When life gets bitter, laughter is the best medicine!

**M. Sanaul Huq**  
*One-mail*

### Accidents

It is now common news for all of us. Road accidents are taking place every day. But nothing is being done to reduce the number of such accidents.

The authorities concerned should look into the matter with a sense of urgency.

**Tasjid Ahmed**  
*Nikungo 2, Dhaka*

### Communicative English

What is the purpose of introducing 'Communicative English' in the educational institutions? The learners can learn the English language easily using dialogue. In the light of it, it can be said that the English books of different classes, especially for the classes at secondary level, prescribed by the National Curriculum & Textbook Board should be written in a simple language as well as simple sentences. I would like to highlight the book of classes 9-10 (English First Paper) only. There are many long sentences in this book, which are really very difficult for the students to learn. Some topics of the book where these sentences are found are mentioned here. Such as The Voice of Women (Unit-18, Lesson-2), A Letter From Nottingham (Unit-9, Lesson-3), The International Mother Language Day (Unit-18, Lesson-3) etc. On the other hand, there are also many mistakes in this book. Correction of the mistakes is a must and the sentences should be shorter. Moreover, there are 100 marks for English first paper in the SSC exams every year and the students are to answer the questions on the basis of that marks. But it is a matter of regret that all the questions are not set up on the basis of that subject only. Some questions like rearranging of sentences, Substitution Table, Vocabulary Test etc. are taken in the question paper from other books, though the first one is taken from the textbook at times.

On the contrary, all the questions are taken from the textbook at the time of setting questions in the question paper of Bengali first paper even in the exams of schools.

**Md. Abdus Salam**  
*Assistant Teacher (English)  
Joypara Pilot High School  
Joypara, Dohar, Dhaka*

### SAU's location

This refers to the letter (11/7/08) written by Prof. Zahidul Haque dismissing my proposal to shift SAU (Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University) from its present location to a new countryside location. Shifting/merging an organisation to a better place or with a same type of institution (say, with Bangladesh Agricultural University which has only Master's, Ph. D. level programmes) could be quite desirable if it is for serving the greater interest of society or nation, saving public money.

Prof. Zahidul Haque asked me a personal question whether I would agree merger of my university/college where I presently serve with any other institution. Well, not only merger even dismantling, if it serves national interest and if society is benefited by doing so, why should I object to that?

**Prof. SAM**  
*One-mail*

### Fuel and food prices

In your article on the World Bank analysis that bio fuels have pushed up the prices of food, you observed that high food prices have caused riots in Bangladesh.

There have been riots in Bangladesh only in the ready made, export-oriented garments industry - and that's been happening for over two years and has nothing to do with fuel prices.

If fuel prices did lead to riots in Bangladesh, surely they would occur outside the garments sector, wouldn't they?

**Iftekhar Sayeed**  
*Dhanmondi  
Dhaka*

### Iodized salt?

How much iodine does the iodized salt contain? Last week, I had been to Rajshahi with some sea fish for my grand daughters because my son was complaining for long that they were running short of iodine there. When I asked him why didn't they take iodized salt? He counter questioned me, "Do you take that awful stuff?" Yes, I said. Then he got four packets of prominent brands of iodized salt and put lemon juice in the salt. As we knew the colour of the salt should turn pink, it did not turn so. I said that all these packets might not be of original brand or company.

When I carried out the test getting the same brands from Dhaka market, they showed no iodine. I'm amazed or confused if the nature of iodine had changed or the prominent companies were not reliable.  
**Molla A. Latif**  
*Kapasia, Gazipur*



PHOTO: STAR

## Mangoes or poison?

We are horrified to see the detection of tones of mangoes ripened with extremely harmful chemicals such as carbide. What are we taking in the name of mangoes? Are we poisoning us and our future generations to gradual painful death? This is a clear case of poisoning the entire population which warrants capital punishment for the offenders. But what a mockery of justice, the offenders were only served with three months' simple imprisonment! Is it the right kind of punishment for a crime of such magnitude? Anywhere in the world the perpetrators of such a horrible crime would get death sentence without any question. We have seen pouring of chemicals (poison) on fish, bananas, grapes and

pineapples indiscriminately by the criminal traders, but only this time we have seen that even mango and jackfruits were not spared. This malpractice is going on unabated due to the weakness and time consuming procedures of our legal system. Imagine, only three months' simple imprisonment for poisoning the entire population! We demand immediate amendment of the law and severe punishment to the criminals. Otherwise, those greedy criminals in the guise of traders will never stop such dreadful activities.

**Mohammad Ataul Hoque**  
*One-mail*

### Inter-faith conference

It is learnt from an AFP dispatch from Riyadh that the Custodian of two Holiest Mosques of Islam and the King of Saudi Arabia will launch an inter-faith conference in Spain later this month from 16 July to 18 July 2008, to be specific. The conference will be attended by representatives from People of Book of Almighty God -- Jews, Christians and Muslims.

The conference is inter alia an outcome of King Abdullah's March 2008 proposal for inter-faith talks. The initiative and the timing plus the context of inter-faith conference appear to be intelligent and forward looking. The move could, among other things, be considered as bold, constructive and free of narrow perceptions in pursuits of inter-faith reconciliation, per se. Congratulations!

Interestingly though, the conference is taking place at a time when People of Book of Almighty God - Jews, Christians and Muslims - are in great need of positive developments in areas such as: one, re-establishment of missing links between and among them - I mean People of Book; two, rejuvenation and re-strengthening of faith-

based common premises for common good; three, minimization, if not elimination of gaps between religious rhetoric and practices; four, reinventing self and societies in light of teachings of Holy Books of Almighty God under prevailing and evolving situations that are associated with say, life, living and continuity in the universe; five, liberation and protection of Almighty God's religions from say, misconception, misperception, misrepresentation, misunderstanding, misinterpretation, wrongful use, misuse, or terrorists' ideology, superstition, taboo and commercialism; six, more workable, result-oriented and sustainable strategies than the existing ones for peace, security, freedom, liberty, democracy, human rights, right to life, equity, equality, progress and prosperity for, as appropriate, all living beings throughout the universe including inter alia human beings - on a continuous basis. Seven, more efficient and effective implementation mechanisms and follow-up regimes than the existing ones for above strategies; eight, mainstreaming knowledge, clues and other related things about say, universe transmitted to human beings and others by

Almighty God via Holy Books in research, development and engineering (RDE) initiatives, as well as activities in areas of science, arts, engineering, technology and other branches of knowledge and application for ensuring maximum benefit to at least maximum number of people and other living beings (as applicable) on a continuous basis. Nine, rescuing human beings from moral, ethical and other kinds of degradation in a sustainable fashion.

Taking into cognisance the above and other related factors, it now appears challenges and opportunities of the conference will be, among other things, complex, inter-disciplinary and multi-dimensional. I would like to view it that way. Further, expectations about the outcome of the conference are apparently running high due to the nature, scope, place and stature of the conference.

The success of the conference would depend on how best and quickest the participants could chart collectively a way forward in support of its missions and objectives.

**Dr. M.S. Haq**  
*One-mail*

## Good results, but...

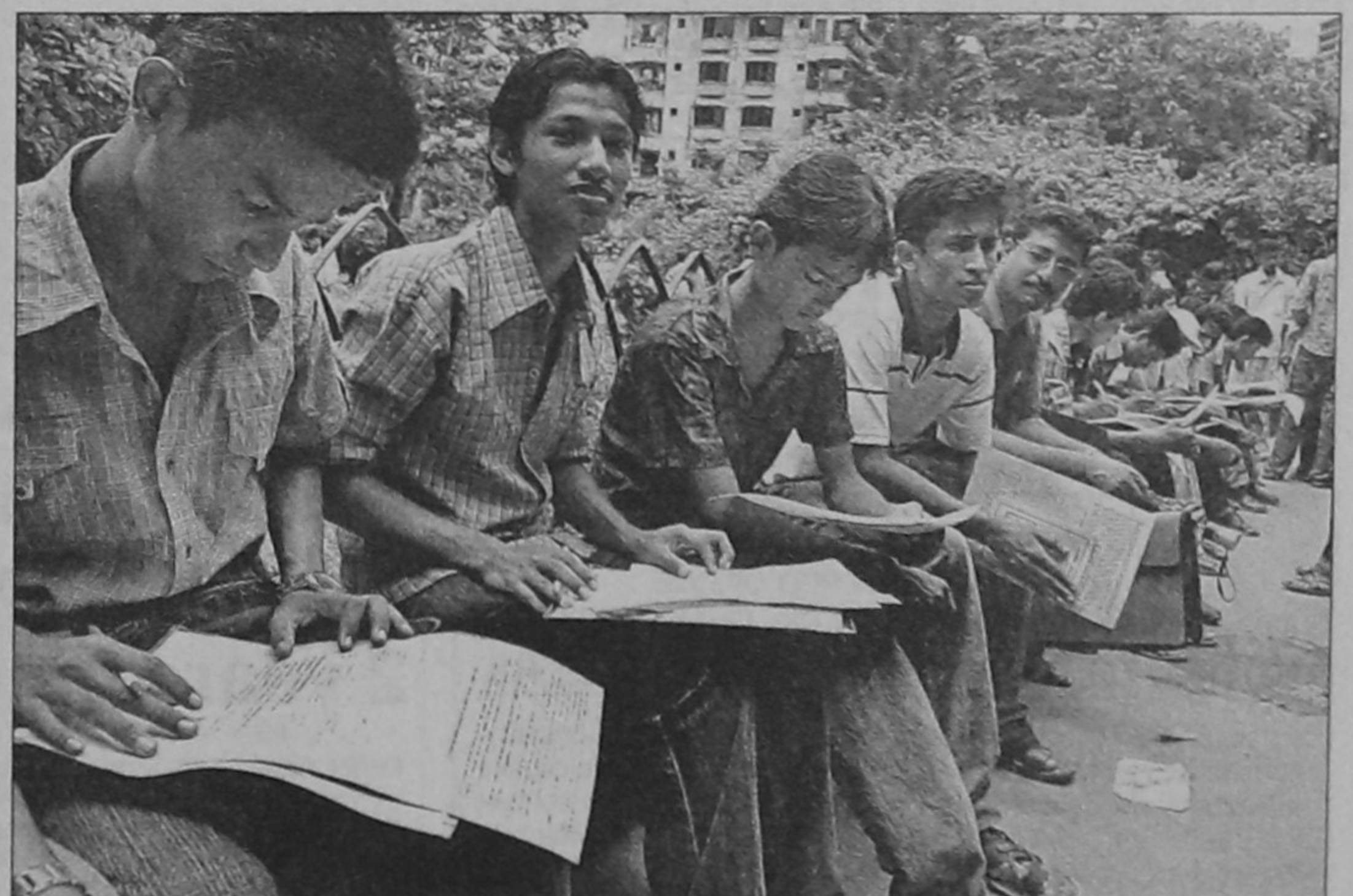


PHOTO: STAR

Beaming faces of the students on the front page of the newspaper: this image shows that the students are over the moon as they have achieved a good result. To be more precise, this year 52,500 students have got GPA 5 in the said exams. And the pass rate is also very healthy: 71.81%, which is more than the pass rate of the previous year.

Based on this result we cannot say that the quality of education has taken a huge stride. We cannot deny the fact that the rural-urban gap has widened as far as performance in the examination is concerned. It is reported that three lakh students, mostly from the rural areas, failed in the

exams.

It is the dearth of teachers in rural areas who can teach mathematics and English that is responsible for the failure of rural students. Again the dropout rate is high in rural areas as the parents cannot support their children's education.

Finally, education should not become the sole possession of the well-off city-dwellers. As education is one of the basic needs, school education should be free so that all the people of the country get the benefit of it.

**Zabed Wali**  
*Pahartali, Chittagong*

## Maturity is not their hallmark

I am a cricket lover and I do not miss any game featuring my country. I get inspired when I see our boys playing a competitive game. There is loss and win in every game, so losing a match does not disappoint me so badly if it is a well contested one. I have been watching our cricket from the beginning of its attaining Test status, but I do not find any marked change or improvement in its quality. I am pretty sure that our boys are still in the same place where they started from.

Here is my experience and comparison. Every day, I go for evening walk and watch some little boys aged between 6 to 8 playing cricket in small vacant places inside residential areas. Their wickets are three vertically placed bricks on each side and one or two wooden pieces as bat. If you stand and watch for a few minutes you will notice that one is throwing the ball to the striking end and the batsman (boy) is trying to hit every ball that comes from the other end,

no matter how the ball is thrown. He tries to hit every ball that comes from the other end and very few touch his bat.

I think our mature cricket boys are still



immature like those kids. They try to hit every ball in every version of the game. They are lucky that most of the balls they try to hit do not touch their bat (in our Bangla commentator's language--bat-e-balley shangkho hoi nai). Had there been shangkho, I believe all our batsmen would have been out within 8-10 overs. If luck favours and one such hit brings him a boundary, he tries the next to score a sixer to get applause from the spectators.

I am pretty sure that our senior players are same as our kids. Even the foreign coaches have failed to teach them the difference between various versions of the game. My request to the coach: please teach our players how to block the ball first and then try to hit only the loose deliveries. I believe talent is there, but they must learn how to play the game correctly.

**Shafiqul Islam**  
*One-mail*