

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.

"Democracy, Whiskey, Sexy"

Every war, conflict, and skirmish, has had its battle cry, all the way back to "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death" during the American War of Independence. Hitler's command to his army was also memorable (ultimately unsuccessful), "Stand or Die" during the World War II.

Today, we have "Democracy, Whiskey, Sexy" which is what an Iraqi told the New York Times when asked what the Americans would bring to his country. Supporters of the war would point out that, the Americans are also bringing democracy to the Iraqi people. But then democracies too can be flawed, after all a democracy elected Hitler to power in Germany in 1933. In the meantime, the Iraqis can console themselves throughout the long occupation, with liberal doses of whiskey and sexy(y).

KJS  
Dhanmandi, Dhaka

M. Khaliquzzaman  
Banani, Dhaka

Muscle flexing America

A few years ago, I saw a television series "The Last Days of Pompeii". In that series there was this champion gladiator of Pompeii, Lydon, having a practice session of wrestling with his Greek friend, Glaucas. After the session Lydon told his friend that it was his fast reflexes and nimbleness that made him a champion in this dangerous game. But he philosophically added that one day, due to the failure of his fast reflexes emanating from old age, he will make a wrong move and will be struck down by another fearsome gladiator.

The USA is the champion gladiator of modern times. Yes, it's gladiator fighting all over again, only thing that is different is the weaponry. It is weapons of mass destruction nowadays! So go ahead America, flex your muscles while you can! Because the path you have

character of the area. And the less said about the traffic jam, the better. Because of increasing number of shopping malls, Dhanmondi has long been suffering from serious traffic congestion. And the fair held on Road 8, deteriorated the situation manifold. The other day it took me 45 minutes to reach my residence in Road 8 from Kalabagan.

Couldn't the authorities concerned hold the fair in another venue, not located in a residential area?

Because of the negligence and nonchalant attitude of the authorities concerned a beautiful Residential Area like Dhanmondi has almost been turned into a slum. Let's not destroy it any more.

Alima Anam  
Dhamondi, Dhaka

Tinni murder case

Has the Tinni murder case been resolved? For I don't see any follow-up news nor the journalist community as charged up as they had been a couple of

Palestinians is different than the response of Saddam Hussein against Kurds and other Iraqis who are fighting against his rule.

His argument that Israel is only defending itself against the Palestinian violence and Saddam was killing Innocent civilians doesn't hold any merit. Saddam Hussein like any dictator was harsh on people who were challenging his autocratic rule. He didn't have any interest in killing innocent people who didn't pose any threat to his rule. As a matter of fact he is the only dictator in the Middle East who created a secular progressive society in Iraq, emancipated women, created one of the best educational and health care systems in the third world countries. This explains why there are no religious extremists linked to Iraq as opposed to other pro-American fundamentalist autocracies in Middle East. All this progress was destroyed by the eleven years of sanctions and relentless bombing by the US and England.

On the other hand Israel is occupying the West Bank in defiance of the international law. It is killing those who oppose the occupation. It collectively punishes the whole population. It is building illegal settlements in Palestinian areas. It has opposed and violated dozens of UN resolutions. Therefore if there is an outlaw country to be attacked by the "Liberators" and liberate millions of people from the occupation of Zionists, then Israel is the most fit country.

Jamil Ahmed  
Houston, Texas, USA

US needs reform, not the UN

Of late, views are being surfaced as to a possible reform in the system of the UN, but with no valid reasons. Is it because the UN has grown too old to cater to the needs of world political kaleidoscope or is it due to a reckless President of a permanent member of the Security Council (the United States) who invaded another member of the UN (Iraq), scornfully ignoring the international body?

But the UN as it stands today, has not only survived the test of time, but also put forth enormous contributions for over five decades toward world peace and order. Well, more often than not, it might appear that the UN couldn't perform according to our expectations or that it couldn't prevent many major wars, ethnic sufferings or many other human afflictions, still the fact remains that since 1945 a third world war (or the last one?) did not happen. There is no fault in the UN structure itself.

However, the role of the members, particularly the five permanent members are definitely crucial in maintaining the world peace and order. Still, no single country can challenge the "unified will" of the US, UK, Russia, China, and France, albeit in the post World War II period, countries like Germany and Japan have transformed themselves into industrial giants and may deserve to be included in the Security Council. But the crux of the problem is not the number of members in the Security Council, but whether the members would distinguish between the just and the unjust, and whether they would exert an "unified will" to uphold the world order.

It is very unfortunate that a great country like the US which gave the world the definition of "democracy" and "liberty", is being led by a person who appears hell bent to play havoc with the sublime principles and traditions of the UN. Not only that, his wanton invasion of a militarily weak and economically feeble country like Iraq also shattered the superb image of the US. This is the gentleman who failed to be elected through popular votes and had to go through an elaborate interpretation of the US Constitution by the Judiciary before being declared as the President of the US. I would therefore urge the learned law-makers of the US to give a second thought as to whether the US Constitution should make it mandatory for a President to be elected through popular votes, for the voice of the people is the voice of God and in God we all trust.

Hafejul Alam  
Dhaka



Freedom?

Freedom is Beautiful

Who says so? You guessed it right. The Iraqis are "free" to protest the presence of US occupying troops, their "liberators". Yes, freedom is beautiful indeed.

For the Iraqis, their newly won freedom means: no drinking water, no electricity, hospitals without medicines. It also means an impending health nightmare, a catastrophe waiting to happen of which the ICRC and UNICEF and other humanitarian agencies have been warning.

The US led war made the situation catastrophic by destroying

what was left of the basic civic services infrastructure. Residents of Baghdad have been living on spurious promises of restoring basic services but little else. Freedom also meant the looting and burning of museums, government buildings, libraries and hospitals before the eyes of the occupying troops whose responsibility it is to maintain basic civilian services and law and order-all of which is conspicuous by their absence.

Liberation means the demolition of an existing regime and

creating a vacuum without giving a thought to what will replace that; precipitating total chaos and breakdown.

Jay Garner - the newly appointed US "administrator of Iraq" - stated the obvious when he reportedly identified his priorities. The clear evidence of any semblance of a plan and the abject failure of the US army to provide minimum of these services confirms utter lack of responsibility.

Fortunately though, restoration of the basic services in Iraqi cities, maintaining law and

public order, revival of medical care, and other minimum services does not need a contingent of foreign personnel; Iraq still has enough professional and technical manpower. All that it requires is the earliest return of these affairs to the Iraqis, return of Iraqi frozen assets abroad for a start. Of course, for some more time, the UN mediated "Oil for Food" programme must continue but only as a transitional measure.

Dr. Zakir Husain, Dhaka

Rumi suicide case

I really don't understand why this fuss over the suicide of schoolgirl Rumi. Is there any point of highlighting this type of news? It doesn't take more than a week to forget about the whole incident only to be stirred up again by a similar news where another girl becomes victim to brutal harassment committed by the 'superior male'.

The Shazneen case has been lingering for four years, then there are Bushra murder case and thousand others. Though there was a verdict of the Simi suicide case, but the verdict itself was an insult to the victim where the culprits were given a very lenient sentence. The verdict of Trisha case, however, was an optimistic one, but one cannot consider the exception as the rule.

I really wonder why we voted two female Prime Ministers! Has the fate of our womenfolk improved a bit? Girls continue to fall prey to the lust of male, the grieving family continues to go from door to door seeking justice, the authorities concerned assure all the possible



assistance only to forget about the episode instantly while the newspapers appear too eager to write a forceful editorial and eagerly wait for the readers

reaction to fill-up the Letters Page!

While the number of victims continues to increase!  
Shamim Iqbal  
Banani, Dhaka

Custodial death

Two news items appeared on April 17 should be examined seriously "Mauled army sergeant dies" and "Army men beat up shopkeeper".

I condemn the death of Sgt. Awal it is such a waste of a valuable life, a colossal loss and grief to his family and loved ones, not to mention the waste of taxpayer's money.

Regrettably, a lot of these pains are inflicted by the men in uniform and it is shameful that the authority resort to indemnify their acts with the imposition of Indemnity Law.

Should the custodial death of Sgt. Awal not be investigated and the guilty be punished? If so, should not the other custodial death be investigated irrespective of the colour of the uniform or the Chips on their shoulder?

taken is not of civilisation, but of barbarian hordes. Flex your muscles until some other brute force of a nation rises up against you and with a mighty blow brings you down.

Kazi Saifuddin Hossain (Lincoln)  
Mohammadpur, Dhaka

Fairs held in residential area

There is a fair going on at the Dhanmondi cricket ground in Road No 8. Before this, a cattle fair was held on the same ground during Eid-ul-Azha. Then there were Youth Fair, Tree Fair and so on. What is the justification of holding these fairs in a residential area? Due to the ongoing fair, the adjacent area has turned into a pandemonium. Thousands of people visit the fair everyday, ruining the residential

months ago, when the murder took place, to unmask the culprits who committed the crime!

Can any one tell me how many murder cases our police force have been able to solve so far? And how many have been pending or dismissed? What is the ratio? Does the statistics appear optimistic enough for the general people to have faith in rule of law or does it encourage the criminals commit more crimes?  
Abid Noor  
Uttara, Dhaka

"UN needs reform"

In response to my letter "UN needs reform", Mr. Mahmood Elahi (April 21) has exposed himself as the defender of Israel's brutal occupation of Palestinians. How is Israel's brutalisation of

"ZIA neon sign flashes in Arabic"

Has the authority taken off the ZIA neon sign in Arabic? I haven't seen any follow-up report lately. Does *The Daily Star* expects us to check this out ourselves? Do they think that they have fulfilled their duty by only giving the news once? Time and again, we have tried to attract the attention of *The Daily Star*, that too in this very Letters Page, that what *The Daily Star* lacks most is in follow-up reports. But our request seems to have fallen on deaf ears. Probably, the 'Newspaper' "committed to people's right to know" doesn't care about what people want to know.

Otherwise, it is really puzzling for me to figure out why they have continued to bring out special supplement on Iraq War for over 30 days and fails to publish a single follow-up report on "ZIA neon sign flashes in Arabic"! This news (local) may not sound that important to *The Daily Star*, but it's important to me and many other readers. Scores of letters published in the Letters Page protesting this ridiculous govt decision speaks for itself.

Anondo Chowdhury  
Baridhara, Dhaka

There was an excellent and timely debate starting to take off regarding the recently installed ZIA neon sign in Arabic. But how come

lately there isn't a single line from our enthusiastic readers of *The Daily Star* Letters Page?

Have they lost interest in a topic of such grave importance? Most likely? But I don't see any dearth of opinion on Iraq War! Thousands of people took to streets; organised seminars, meeting, processions and invented other innovative ways of protesting Iraq invasion including the very own original Bengali style protest vandalism. But these same people don't seem to care a bit about what's going on in our own country, how the government is trying to ruin the secular image of our nation by introducing overnight the neon sign of our international airport in Arabic, without bothering a bit about what the people have to say about it, whether they support this step or not and without caring to explain why they took this decision!

The only place we saw some protest is *The Daily Star* Letters Page, no column, no article and surprisingly no editorial only a few letters from the ordinary citizens protesting in their own limited way the absurd decision taken by the people's elected government. But I never expected their reaction to be so short-lived.  
Mou  
Gulshan, Dhaka

It's very frustrating to notice that there isn't any single letter any more protesting the abrupt government decision to install a new Arabic neon sign in ZIA.

Our people lose interest in everything so easily! And the government takes advantage of our lethargic attitude in every possible way. They know that whatever autocratic or undemocratic decision they take, though people will initially raise a hue and cry about it, it won't take too long for them to forget about it as well.

However, I, at least, didn't expect it from the contributors of *The Daily Star* Letters Page. They don't mind devoting all their energy to debate over Kemal Ataturk or Rabindra Sangeet, but lose interest in a topic which affects the characteristic and the very outlook of our nation!  
Chowdhury Sobur Khan  
Cantonment, Dhaka

The ZIA neon signs in Arabic - visible while flying in - compels some important comments on the pervasive elements in Bangladeshi society.

Firstly, yes, 40 flights from countries that have Arabic as an "official" language do fly into ZIA every week. But along those lines, why doesn't the CAAB have the

numerous official languages of other airlines and airways (Singapore and Malaysia?) in neon as well?

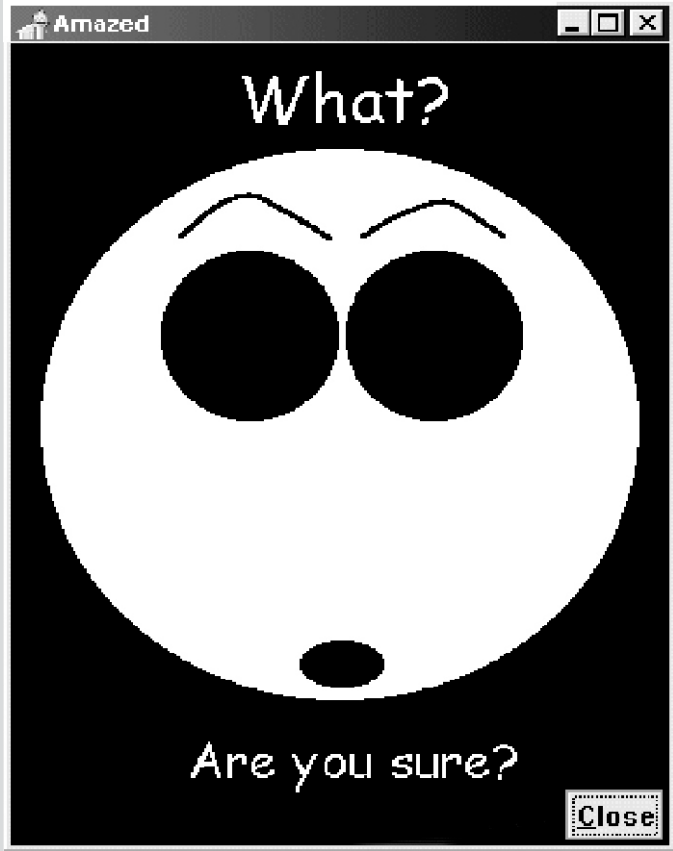
Secondly, as Mr "Elanipier" pointed out (April 16) that Bangladesh is not constitutionally a secular nation, and in fact, an Islamic one; therefore justifying (in her/his terms) the usage of Arabic. Doesn't that effectively mean, the CAAB should also use Urdu - most significant linguistic purveyor of Islam (within the elite) into Bangladesh - as well? (The same line of argument should negate the "UN as fundamentalist" raised by her/him). Ignoring (silencing) the more indigenously interpretations of Islam which do exist in Bangladeshi society.

AW Khan  
Chamelibagh, Dhaka

So now we have ZIA neon sign flashing in three languages! If the 4-party alliance has still not thought about it, here is an idea to them. How about introducing a fourth one in Urdu?

Nazmul Karim  
Dhaka

I, as a Muslim is surprised as well as shocked to see the bitter and hostile reactions of some of the Muslim writers expressing their irritation for displaying the neon sign of ZIA in Arabic. Don't they



have any respect for their religious language?

Every Muslim is supposed to be able to read the Holy Quran well as say his daily prayers in Arabic. They all learn it in their early childhood. We revere the language from our heart. Bangladesh

itself is a Muslim country. So the religion Islam has to have a place in our society and it is an integral part of our daily life. Even at London Heathrow Airport in terminal 3 departure building there is a chapel. We also must identify ourselves with the other Muslim

countries. A traveller landing at ZIA will be impressed to see the neon sign in Arabic what would also be his expectation. For observing and respecting the religion one cannot be branded as fundamentalist.

So, being a Muslim why should one be so bitter about the exposure of his own religious fervour? I feel proud and delighted to see the neon sign flashing in Arabic - the very religious language of mine. I also at the same time urge the C.A.A.B to illuminate the Airport during the two great occasions of Eid festival and welcome the passengers. Let us not be critical of our own religion, the very basis of creation of this country. Why should *The Daily Star* allow such uncalled-for controversy and all just for nothing?

A.B.M. Zakaria  
Mirpur, Dhaka

This is in reference to those letters complaining about the Arabic neon sign at Zia airport (April 14, 16).

Apparently these are the people who feel irritated by anything and everything even remotely related to Islam.

I have a suggestion for them. Change your names to something non-Arabic, because Arabic sounds too fundamentalist and

not suitable for the 'New World order'.

Shukla Mirza, Qatar

In response to the letter of Mr. Rashid Choudhury (19 April) I would like to reply him with the following points:

A) Like English and Bengali, Arabic is also widely spoken and read in our country. Here the Muslims start their day reciting the holy Quran. In Bengali language we use Arabic words as much as we use English words. We say our prayers five times a day in Arabic. In our private, social and state work Arabic is vastly used.

B) Mr. Choudhury mentioned that Bangladesh is a secular country --- this is not true. As per the constitution, Bangladesh is not a secular country. Our state religion is "Islam" and it is a multi - religious society.

C) May be in some part of the Arabic world our Arab brothers do treat us somewhat in an inferior manner. But that's not the attitude of the majority of our Arab brothers.

D) Yes, As a Muslim and an Ummat of prophet (Sm) I always want a closer brotherhood with the Arabs -- under the guideline given by prophet Hazrat Mohammad (S.M).

M.A. Bashar, Dhaka