

ALY ZAKER

My Bhasha Your Bhasha

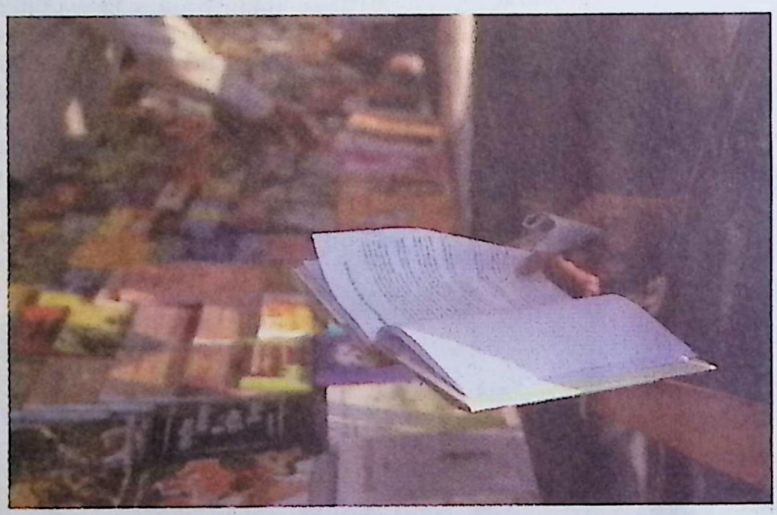


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When this sees the print, we will have just observed the Shaheed Dibash, now the International Mother Language Day. And a lot will have been written on the subject. So I shall try not to seek the indulgence of the readers' patience to add to their burden. Instead I would like to dwell upon a debate that had started a couple of years back on standardising Bangladeshi Bangla in various media and has recently re-emerged in various websites where Bangalis surf along and argue or express their opinion. What should be our Bangla for as a medium of expression in a formal situation? The admix of dialect we speak? Or what is known as promito Bangla? The propagators of dialects are of the opinion that Promito or standard Bangla that is usually found in the books cannot be 'our' Bangla. We should speak, write and express ourselves in the Bangla that we speak in our daily lives. 'We' who? We are those that live in or around the city of Dhaka or some of the towns towards central Bangladesh. One propagator of this once even said that our written Bangla would have to metamorphose into how we usually speak in our day-to-day life in Dhaka. Well what will happen in the future only future can tell because we live in a dynamic world. The controversy arises when someone tries to impose their opinion as that of a nation. Some writers have ridiculed a post written by Syed Badrul Hasan in the Daily Star, recording his dissent on mispronunciations in the Bangla words by the TV newsreaders and announcers. His comments were taken to be tantamount to an affront to our 'very' homegrown Bangla. Though I do not recall the columnist saying anything on the dialects in the plays that are performed in Bangladesh, he was taken to task for even indulging in such audacious comments as to refrain from using dialect in our expressions. Well I am not against using of dialects as the linguistic vehicle in any form of literature. Indeed some of the most popular and successful plays that I have acted in, namely, *Nural Deener Shara Jiban* or *Dewan Gazir Kissa* (Rangpur and Jessore) were written in dialect. But then these plays and many others like Dhaka Theatre's *Haat Hodai* or quite a few of Aranyak's plays were performed with alacrity in dialect. So there should be no debate about the use of dialect in any written or spoken art form as long as that expresses the content of a particular area in the language of its own. But a very valid debate may ensue if some one tries to impose that or an admixture of various dialects as the "language of Bangladesh". It might not be out of place to mention what Rabidranath had once said, when he was asked why he did not write some-