

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.

The fiery speech



The Language Movement that began on February 21, 1952 when Rafique, Jabbar, Salam and others fell martyrs is now well conceived and rightly propagated as the first element to have sown the seed of separation from Pakistan. And after nineteen years, the historic 7 March (1971) speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib, following Pakistanis' conspiracy not to allow Mujib to implement his people's mandate, the Six-point programme with which his party swept to the election victory made it crystal clear that the Pakistanis' domination and subjugation would soon be over. More so, when Bangabandhu, before the biggest ever meeting of Bengalees in the then Race Course Maidan (now Suhrawardy Uddyan) concluded his speech by a forceful declaration, "Our struggle this time is for freedom, our struggle this time is for emancipation." The speech just struck the right chord with hundreds of thousands of people there and on the roof-top of each and every building around, (and in reality with the nation as a whole) and they echoed in concurrence in thunderous voice, "Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu." Flamboyant and fearless, he delivered a poetic, mellifluous worded speech, unique in style and presentation, that also delineated the deprivations in all sectors which Bengalees had to suffer in the

hands of the Pakistani rulers since 1947, and cautioned them by uttering, "no more trampling down are dabya rakte parbana." To frustrate their evil design, he called upon his people to face the Pakistani military by saying, "Make every house a fortress and swoop on them with whatever you have". Bengalees were left with nothing short of the green signal for disowning Pakistan and for preparing, lock, stock and barrel, for achieving their own homeland, Bangladesh. And Bengalees already imbued with their leader's directives of 7 March, and final call of 26 March, fought the 9-month long liberation war, literally in his name (though he was absent due to his being taken prisoner to Pakistan on the charge of high treason for declaration of Independence of Bangladesh), and eventually materialised their dream of independent sovereign Bangladesh, but at the cost of three millions lives. Bengalees paid too much price in blood in too short a time. Think about the importance of the speech on 7 March 1971 which is called by many as his swan-song. Verily, that speech was the prelude to splitting of Pakistan and emergence of Bangladesh. Hence the speech is a treasure trove, like all great speeches in the annals of history.

AH Dewan

South Kafrul, Dhaka Cantt, Dhaka

earned money or property, the govt. can take an undertaking from the person concerned. Only then he should be entitled for amnesty. The govt. may draw the demarcation line between the major and minor cases of corruption in terms of the money involved.

This will benefit both the govt. and the accused and will also act as a deterrent for others.
Mohammad Alauddin
Green Road, Dhaka

National government?

Some of our prominent political leaders, especially the reformists of the last government and some eminent personalities are suggesting and seriously advocating formation of a National Government in place of the present CTG. Is this theory a part of our constitution, if not why they are suggesting such form of government in place of the existing one which is somehow constitutionally established? We remember the then Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia commented that "Only the infants and insane are neutral." However, she had to accept the caretaker government and ultimately the constitution was amended. Our constitution is a sacred document. We should honour this document and run this country as it dictates. I believe those who are advocating for an extra-constitutional National Government are talking from the point of their own political standings. Most of these leaders are politically bankrupt, they do not have much public support.

The present CTG is capable enough to hold a free, fair and credible election. The people are waiting for that day. I believe if this government holds the election as it is saying time and again and hand over power to the elected representatives, salutes the head of the newly elected government and steps back, it would be a milestone for Bangladesh and history would be rewritten.

As a commoner, my request to those leaders-- instead of misleading the people, please lend your heads and hands and assist this government to hold a fair election.
Shafiqul Islam
One-mail

Bangladeshis in Saudi Arabia

Following allegations of crimes committed by Bangladeshi expatriates, the Saudi government (SG) has decided to reduce the number of Bangladeshis in Saudi Arabia dramatically and put restriction on issuing new visa.

It is sheer injustice that crimes are committed by some errant fellows and punishment is given to all. Saudi Arabia is the biggest manpower importing country in the world for Bangladeshis.

The matter has created great concern among the Bangladeshi community here in Saudi Arabia and they are passing their days amid uncertainty.

The government should take up the matter with its Saudi counterpart and resolve the issue in the interest of all concerned.

Mohd. Masud Rana
IDB, Jeddah
Saudi Arabia

Welfare banking

Understanding the behaviour and practice as well as ethics of welfare banking is still a weak point for the people who deal with the sector. The particular text and presentation on the subject to open up the merits and dynamism of welfare banking is yet to reach the grassroots level people. Although welfare based banks are

facing challenges and adopting measures to explore its benefits, the overall results are not yet very good.

So the need here is to open research windows in order to present the scope and text for understanding of welfare banking.

Md. Tauhidur Rahman
Officer
Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited
Mirpur-1 Branch, Dhaka

False cases

Most criminals act within knowledge of police, says IGP (28 Feb, DS). But when policemen themselves become criminals, people are left with little to do.

The problem becomes all the more complicated when false cases are filed in collusion with the police.

A sufferer
One-mail

Nursing as profession

Bangladesh, as we know, is an over populated country. Our economy is mainly agro-based. Contribution of industry and service sectors is increasing but still it is not very significant. The agriculture sector is considered as overburdened with excess manpower. Unemployment and under employment is an acute problem here.

In the western world there is huge shortage of nurses in hospitals and medical centres. They are recruiting nurses from the developing countries to meet their shortage. It is estimated that in the coming years the shortage will be increased further. We should treat the situation as an opportunity and train our youths in nursing profession and employ them in our medical hospitals and send the rest to western countries. A significant number of youth could get employment as nurses in the USA, England and other countries. They will be able to earn a decent remuneration. They will also send scarce foreign currencies to their families living in Bangladesh. The country will be benefited when the youths are employed abroad.

The huge population did not transform into skilled manpower. If one looks at our neighbour, India, one can see that its technical, professional, business manpower is employed all over the world. Non-resident Indians are remitting huge amounts of foreign currency every year to India. Its currency is getting stronger day by day. India is importing developed technology, equipment and raw materials and manufacturing industrial machinery. So its economic development is taking place at an amazing pace.

If we can develop skilled manpower, our huge population will be a blessing. But we need professional & technical education and training. Nursing is a decent profession in the developed world. It is an honourable job and earning from this profession is also very good.

Our government needs to establish more nursing institutions in hospitals where training can be imparted to the students of nursing. Along with the professional training, the students' English language skills must be improved. Nursing training and good command over spoken English will help our young men and women to get jobs in hospitals abroad.

The decision makers should consider the above proposal in right earnest.

Md. Ashraf Hossain
Bashabo, Dhaka

Fast foods

While in a country like ours eating fast food is a 'cool' thing, in the

western world eating only nutritious foods is now regarded as 'cool'. The reason is simple, obesity is supposed to be a serious problem in this part of the world together with all the diseases it may lead to. In schools, children are not allowed to eat junk foods and fizzy drinks, they must have five types of fruits and vegetables along with plenty of water. Food choice is made strictly on health grounds.

Fast food can be tasty and alluring but it tells upon our health. Let us show due sensitivity to the issue, so that our children in schools can start their lives in a healthy way.

Rifat Mabhub
Edinburgh
UK

Sheikh Hasina's treatment

A lot has been said and written about Sheikh Hasina's treatment abroad. All experts in this regard concluded on one point only: Ear treatment has to be done in the United States as it is not available in Bangladesh.

I would like to ask one simple question, is it possible to bring the equipment and specialist doctors from the US to conduct the treatment in Bangladesh? If it is possible, other people with the same ear problem will also be benefited.

Arif Zakaria
One-mail

Media and politicians' health

We are flummoxed about why the print media in Bangladesh is haemorrhaging us with updates on health conditions of our former heads of government and high-ups. It is neither appropriate in today's world to openly talk about one's health, nor is it worth a try to kindle compassion of a population that is now aware of many of their bizarre deeds. Moreover, our politicians are endowed with unusually long life span, and, therefore, we do not want to waste our energy on something that we do not have to worry about.

To the media please do not make us sick with your health bulletins while your 'patients' continue to plot to be recycled to power and molest us for yet another cycle.

Nayem Jafar
New Jersey

Time for them to go

In light of the recent performances of the Tigers since the Twenty20 World Cup right up to the just concluded South Africa series, one can only come to the conclusion that they are regressing rather than progressing under coach Jamie Siddons and captain Mohammed Ashraf. There has to be some accountability. Cricket is a sport where an impoverished nation like Bangladesh spends millions of dollars each year. Continued lack of performance cannot merely be shrugged off, Jamie Siddons has had enough time and opportunity to show at least minimal success since he took the reins of the Tigers but has failed miserably. Under him the Tigers did not win a single match, be it Tests or One-Dayers against New Zealand or South Africa. More alarmingly, they were not even competitive. These are very poor returns in the field of international sports.

As for Ashraf, the less said the better. Someone with his unstable and mercurial temperament is not leadership material. In life and sports- CHARACTER IS DESTINY. If one were to go by Ashraf's inconsistent performance and lack of a learning curve in his career, there is no way to justify handing him the captaincy, let alone continuing as a captain going forward. The captaincy should go to an individual with a cool head and the will to win. Someone who can inspire the team- Ashraf is not that man. Furthermore, being captain has further diminished his already erratic performances.

In the interest of the future of cricket in Bangladesh, the BCB has to make some decisions here. Siddons and Ashraf should both go from the posts of coach and captain. We are at a vital crossroads of Bangladesh cricket - even Bangladeshis fans are questioning whether Bangladesh should still continue as a Test nation. BCB should step in and stop the rot- Siddons and Ashraf must go!

S. Abedin
Foster City, CA
USA

Prince Sultan's gift

The report in The Daily Star (10th March) on a gift by Saudi Crown Prince and Deputy Prime Minister Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz to former military dictator and president of Bangladesh Hussain Muhammad Ershad has drawn my attention. The gift is a Mercedes-Benz 350 car.

In many civilised countries this sort of gift would be considered a bribe. Anyway, the rule in this case

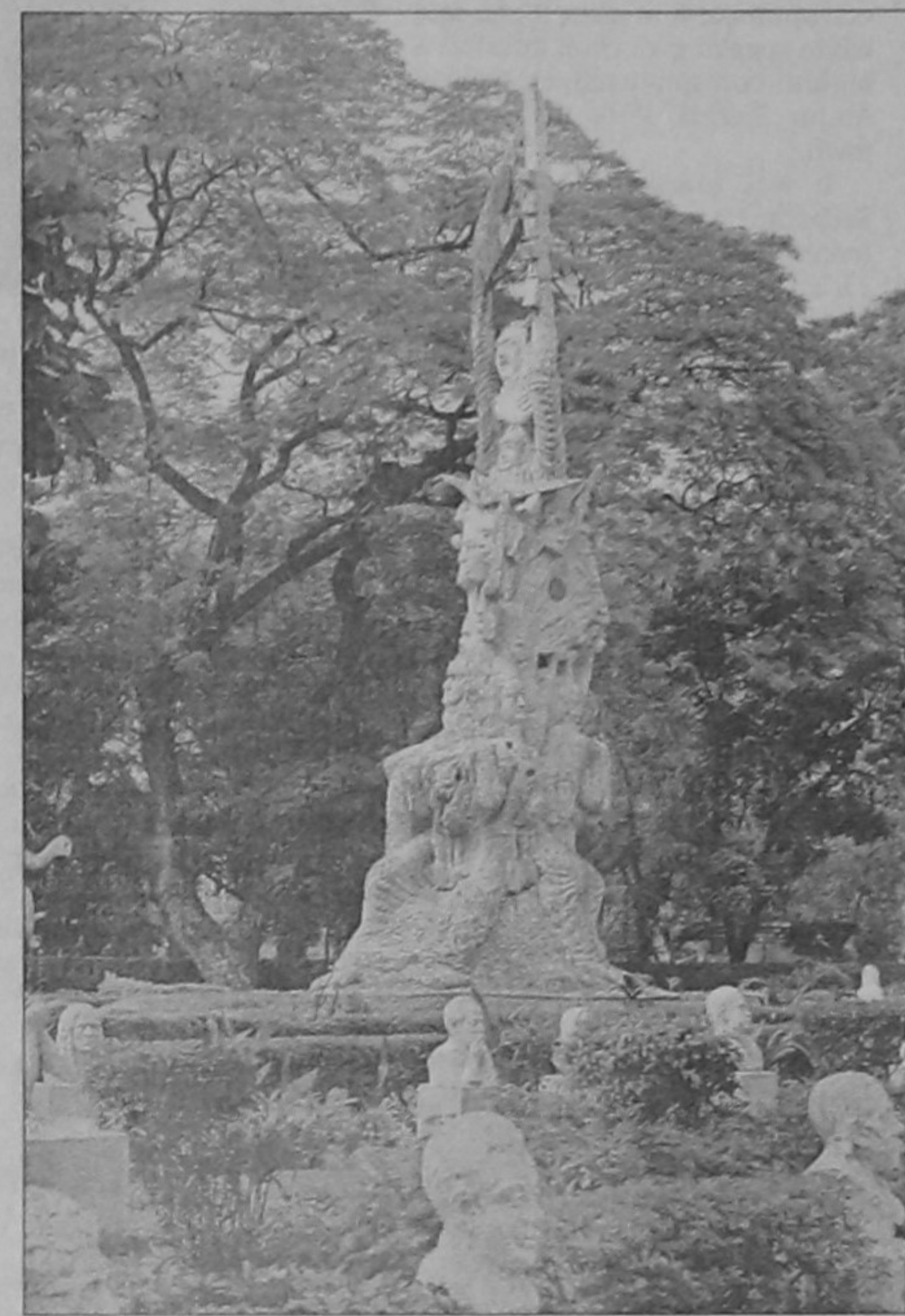
Sculptures at DU

I would like to thank DS for publishing a news item on March 19, 2008 regarding the regrettable condition of precious sculptures situated at DU.

DU is not a mere educational institution. It has been more than that since its inception. In the process, many precious art works have found their places here. These works bear the glorious history of our country and surely add to the majesty and glory of this university. I vividly recall how I felt when I watched these splendid sculptures for the first time when I came here to get admitted. No matter how much session jam and political violence occurs here, we, DU students, take pride in the grandeur it possesses in its entirety. But the eroding grandeur of those sculptures due to lack of proper care and maintenance is deeply disheartening for us.

I, on behalf of all the students of DU, urge the authorities concerned to take immediate and effective actions to renovate these splendid sculptures.

Ahmad Ferdous Bin Alam
Department of CSE, DU



should be high import duty, value added tax and other relevant duties that must be paid by the recipient. All expensive cars should have a high road tax too.

Tayeb Husain
Lund, Sweden

Foreign doctors

You must have noticed that a number of foreign doctors, especially Indian doctors are working in Bangladesh. Some of them are working here in the name of technical collaboration and some of them are simply consulting individually. It is the law of the soil that any foreign doctor must have necessary registration from Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council (BMDC). Not only Bangladesh, this type of law exists in each and every country of the world. We have no objections if some new technologies are introduced and hands-on training are given to our local doctors by the foreign physicians. But this is quite unacceptable that they are violating the existing laws and also some of them are working without work permit. The question arises, why should we need regulatory bodies like BMDC, Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) and Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. If they think that Bangladesh should remain free for all doctors in the world who could practice here without registration, they should declare that and declare themselves non-existent. We do not need any impotent bodies being run with the money from public coffers.

M Amin
Lalbagh, Dhaka

"Collared" tigers

I am appalled to read that a scientific study of tigers involving radio-telemetry has been suspended by the Bangladesh government because of well-intentioned but entirely misdirected concerns. Adam Barlow who is the victim in this case is a capable wildlife biologist and a student of Dr. David Smith one of the pioneers of tiger research. The drug employed has been used in dozens of immobilizations of wild tigers in Nepal, India and Russia by myself and other researchers. Suspending such an important tiger research project based on mere apprehensions is unjustified.

Unless mortalities actually occur during sedation, death of a collared tiger weeks or days later cannot be attributed to the research work. Our long term studies in India that show natural annual losses of around 20% in healthy tiger populations. Thus, for

example, one in every 5 collared tigers is likely to die in Sundarbans. The radio-collar does not bestow immortality on its wearer.

On the other hand, if the objection is to the very conduct of invasive studies in general, then there should be a ban on all bird-ringing, which causes far more stress and mortalities than radio-telemetry on big cats. We should then kiss good bye to all migratory bird studies. The principle involved is simple: invasive studies when conducted properly pose only a very low degree of risk to individual animals involved. But they do generate huge gains for science and conservation of the entire species or ecosystems. This crucial knowledge cannot be generated by other techniques. Targeting such studies wholesale harms conservation.

Seventeen years ago, I too faced similar public hysteria leading to a capricious stoppage of my research on tigers in India. I fought against such misdirected concerns and continued my work for years. This paved the way later for several more valuable radio-telemetry studies of tigers being conducted at Panna, Kanha, Ranthambore, Sundarbans - some of which are still ongoing contributing to saving tigers.

I hope the Bangladesh government heeds these lessons from across the border.

K. Ullas Karanth, Ph.D
Director
Wildlife Conservation Society - India Program
Bangalore, Karnataka
India

Land grabbing in CHT

The main problem of Chittagong Hill tracts is complexity of land. Recently, some leading newspapers published reports on this issue. They stated that indigenous people were illegally capturing lands of Bengalis.

But the question is, who are those Bengalis? The government should address the issue with a view to settling it on a permanent basis.

Hamlock Chakma
One-mail

Media

It is unfortunate that these days in Bangladesh media we only see some well known personalities who have identified themselves with a particular political ideology.

When the media is given freedom it doesn't mean it will neglect the very principles of professional journalism.

Nasimul Ghani
One-mail

Election funds

I vehemently oppose the proposal put forward by the Awami League recently on the issue of the government funding the political parties which secured at least 10% of the votes in the last parliamentary election for conducting the forthcoming national election. The political parties should conduct election with their own funds and the candidate should bear the expenses required for the purpose. The state's money is meant for meeting the expenses required by the state and the people. It has many other priority areas such as poverty alleviation, creation of jobs for the ultra poor, disaster mitigation, undertaking emergency programmes etc. The nation's other requirement is to address the issues such as food shortage, fertiliser crisis, electricity, gas, agricultural and human development and so on. Therefore, this request should not in any circumstances be taken into consideration.

The Awami League and other political parties also requested the government to increase the ceiling of election expenditure from Tk.500,000 to Tk.1,500,000. This request is also unreasonable and impractical in the context of ethics and transparency. Rather, the government should reduce the previous ceiling of Tk.500,000 to Tk.350,000 in order to avoid misuse of money to influence voters during the election. Election expenditure should be minimum and practical.

The responsibility of a leader is to present himself or herself to the people of his or her area as a candidate for national election with required efficiency and capacity to lead. And it is the responsibility of the people to choose their leader through a free and fair election without any monetary influence.

Md. Shahjahan Mia
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