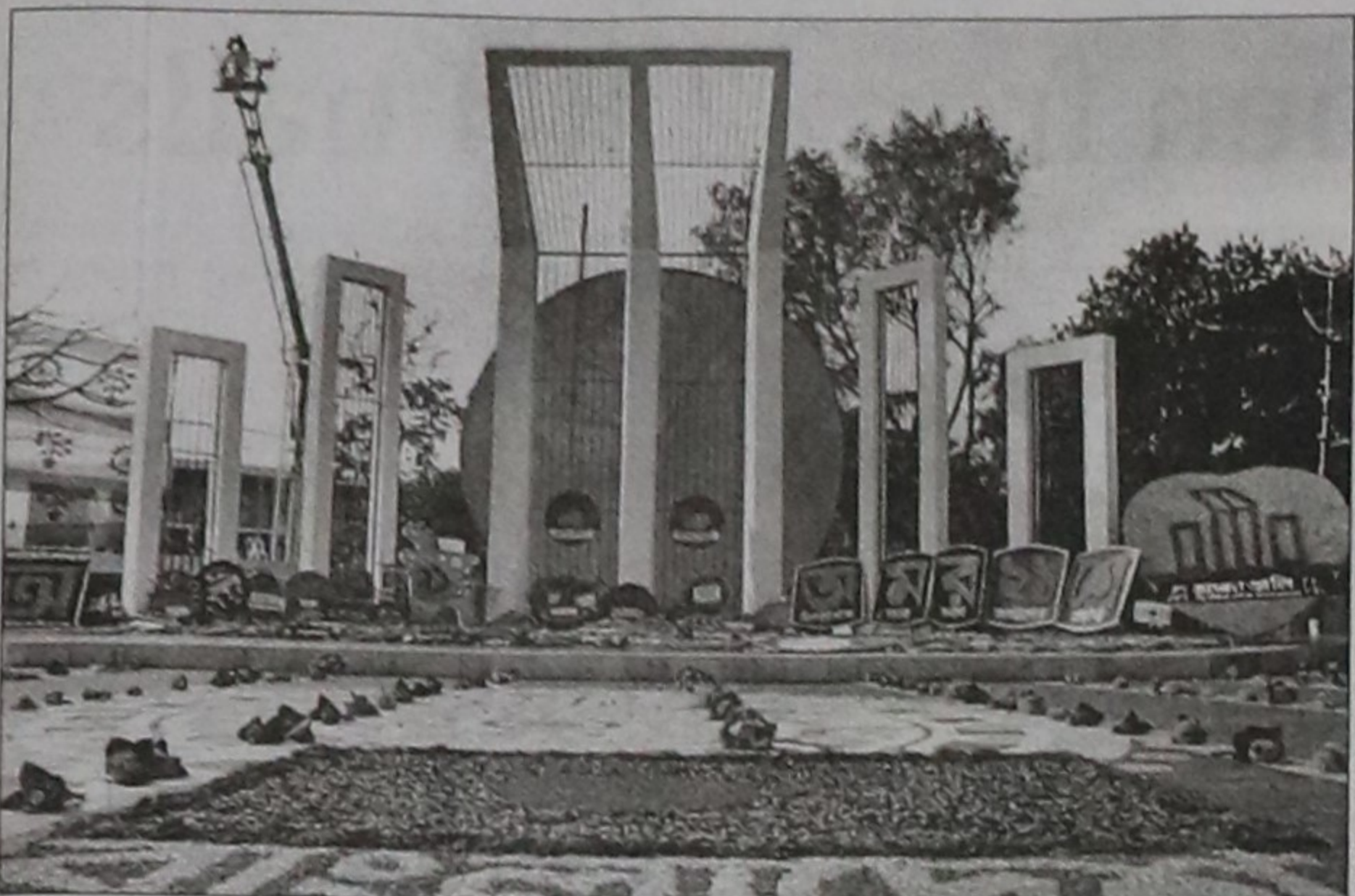


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

Bangla, not Bengali



Our colonial rulers used to misspell many names and had left them written in the documents since they had usurped the administrative power in the sub-continent. It is a matter of great pity that we are still using those names unchanged and without protest for almost 250 years. As one of the speakers of Bangla, my primary concern is the name of our language. Our foremost duty is to revive the name of our loving mother tongue "Bangla" and shake off that wrong name "Bengali".

Generally, names are and can never be translated in other languages. Especially the proper nouns, because a name bears the unique identity of particular entity. Sometimes a name is

translated for the purpose of better understanding only. Moreover, it does not sound good to use such translated names, especially that the nation achieved a unique milestone-- 21st February shedding blood for the mother-tongue which is now recognised by the United Nations as "International Mother Language Day". We have to standardise the spelling of our language for proper pronunciation in English and all other widely used international languages.

Rezaul Amin
Social activist
Doharipara
Mirpur, Dhaka

Errant umpires

Why is it that when Australian players appeal for lbw or caught behind, the finger goes up without a second thought and when Bangladeshi cricketers appeal, the umpires are unmoved. Besides playing poorly, I believe there were several matches which Bangladesh lost due to poor umpiring. Take for example Ashoka De Silva. I think he is the worst umpire in cricketing history.

In 2007 when India toured Bangladesh after the World Cup, Bangladesh lost the first match entirely because an lbw decision was not given by him and Dhoni remained not out until the end of the match. Even a blind man could have made the correct decision that day. Look at Steve Bucknor. Even after that humiliating incident in Australia, he is still umpiring. Why is it that umpires never get punished for making wrong decisions? Players get punished for bowling actions, running on the pitch, slow over rate and so on. During the first Test between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh on 27 Dec 08, when Sri Lanka were batting first, several obvious lbw decisions were turned down which would have been given to the stronger team. Why this indifference? Cricket is just not fun watching anymore. I believe the ICC should introduce fines and suspension for umpires.

Aminur Rahim
New DOHS, Mohakhali
Dhaka

Our teachers

Teachers are the guardians of the nation. But we are really disappointed to see the role of many teachers, especially at the highest seats of learning.

Human Rights situation

Human rights violations, especially violence against and oppression of women and children, are a major concern of our government.

In rural Bangladesh, girls are often kept in the house and encouraged to do only housework until they get married. Denied their basic right to literacy, they cannot participate in the country's development. Rural girls need a non-formal system of education and schools that have flexible schedules, are close to their homes, with teachers who understand and support them, and impart not only basic education, but also basic skills to help them perform their role and responsibilities in their families. A relatively large number of children in Bangladesh are living in difficult situations. They are not only deprived of basic health and education services, but suffer family stress or breakdown due to poverty, low status, floods and disasters, nutritional stunting etc.

In the towns, youngsters can be found almost everywhere. They belong to the unregulated informal sector workforce and the degree of their exploitation

depends on their occupation and employer.

Nadia Ahmed
Department of English
IIUC



Congratulations!

First of all I thank my fellow Bangladeshi people who exercised their democratic rights when voting in the election by standing patiently for long hours in line. We should give thanks and appreciation to our chief election commissioner and his staff and colleagues for completing this election after facing many challenging and difficult situations. Also, thank you, the caretaker government. The nation is grateful to the law enforcement agencies for maintaining discipline and a peaceful environment. Thanks to all participants who contested this election. Without their participation, this election would be meaningless. I congratulate everyone elected as a member of parliament, especially Sheikh Hasina and her party, the Awami League for their landslide victory.

This huge victory clearly means a big responsibility, you must avoid all kinds of corruption, partiality and emotion. Make parliament meaningful. Change our many backdated, ineffective laws, establish new laws and rules that can solve our problems. You are the legislator, you have the power.

We are now in the 21st century, the whole world has left us behind. In parliament, exercise your knowledge and use your best ideas to make a better Bangladesh.

Future peace and prosperity of Bangladesh depends on your performance.

Nokib-E-Kibria
Toronto, Canada

It is the most significant moment in the history of Bangladesh that the people have spoken against corruption, nepotism, terrorism, anti-liberation and communal forces, price-hike and many other discrepancies existing in the country. It is a united stand of the nation to forge ahead for a better future.

Let us congratulate both the winners and the other contestants. Let us join hand in hand under the newly elected regime for building our country.

It is a milestone achieved. We hope your achievements will be followed by future caretaker governments of Bangladesh.

My hats off to you.
Taher J.
KSA

Same story!

Several years of "grand corruption" by Khaleda Zia's sons and cronies have resulted in the BNP Alliance getting about 10% of her nemesis Hasina's Awami League. Hasina has already commented that hers was the only "democratic" rule even though this is the fourth election; the BNP for its part seems to be saying their supporters were prevented from voting even though 70% of the electorate has cast its vote. So what has changed? Nothing. The same players are back - and I bet with a vengeance. Antagonism and disgrace has already raised its ugly head even in these early hours and the stench is nasty.

Let the mud slinging, hair pulling and dysfunctional politics begin one more time. To the caretaker government I say, thank you for the circus. To the Election Commission I say, thank you for the gymnastics. Let our poor rudderless nation sail once more in its circular journey of rotating dynastic dictatorships in the name of "democracy".

Shabbir A Bashir, PhD
San Francisco Bay Area
California, USA

Jamuna Future Park

The under construction Jamuna Future Park is the largest shopping mall in Asia or the third largest in the world. That is what we know from the prime time TV advertisement and full page supplements in the most circulated national daily newspapers. The owning company will make this park a monument for Bangladesh like Petronas Twin Towers in Malaysia, Taj Mahal in India or even the Pyramids in Egypt or the Great Wall of China. The park will have 41 lakh square feet of floor space, a food court of international standard for 3000 people, parking facilities for 5000 cars, banquet hall for 500 people, health club & gymnasium for 2000 people, seven cinema halls in one Cineplex, a 45 MW captive power plant for its own power supply and so on.

No doubt it is a massive installation and really thrilling news for this country to have the largest shopping mall in Asia. But how is it going to help this country in its economic growth and employment generation?
Engr. Md. Aminul Hoque
Khalishpur, Khulna

No anti-Islamic law

The Awami League in its election manifesto has promised that the party will not make any anti-Islamic law. This is a common practice all over the world but the party had to renew it just to counter the propaganda by others against it, calling it an "anti-Islamic" organisation.

But all governments have the right to pass laws against extremists, violators and users of religion for some other purposes. Here in Bangladesh, some so-called religious extremists use some misinterpreted religious theories just to mislead people for their personal gains, brain wash many to be killers, promise heaven after their death, destroy cultural heritages, preach hatred against other believers and any law passed to curb these practices could not be termed as "anti-Islamic" law.

Let me cite an example. Recently a tribal Taliban leader in Pakistan has vowed to kill all girls in his area if they go to school. The Holy Quran itself has said "Education for all is Farz", meaning education is compulsory for each man and woman. Now this man is violating the Islamic code using Islam as a tool and destroying the very Islam he is claiming to be a follower of. Here a strict state law is required to handle this man to save Islam and mankind. This cannot be termed "anti-Islamic". Similarly, the Awami League must not refrain from making laws to contain extremism.

Shafiqul Islam, NY

CTG and EC

I wish to congratulate the caretaker govt. and the Election Commission for their excellent task of holding a peaceful election.

It is a milestone achieved. We hope your achievements will be followed by future caretaker governments of Bangladesh.

My hats off to you.
Taher J.
KSA

Brutal Israeli aggression

Israel has shamelessly, mercilessly and brutally attacked innocent people of Gaza killing more than 300 Palestinians and wounding more than 600 people. It is Israel's brutal campaign to quash the Palestinians. Israeli military spokesman Avi Benayahu said some 250 attacks were carried out since the offensive began. Israel's air force obliterated symbols of Hamas power on the third day of its overwhelming assault on Gaza. Israel has played the role of a terrorist nation since its birth in 1948. Israel has become a great threat to the entire Middle East region.

In New York, the Zionist backed UN Security Council expressed serious concern about the escalating situation in Gaza and called on Israel and the Palestinians to immediately halt all violence and military activities. The

UN's most powerful body called for a new ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. It is very much funny to see that an entire nation of Israel is fighting not against any other nation but against a small minority-- Hamas group.

Where is Arab League now? Where is OIC? Why are not they doing anything offensive against Israel? I urge people around the world to protest against this brutal Israeli aggression against the innocent people of Palestine and strongly hope that Israel will pay for this malfesance. This aggression might be a prelude to further violence.

I do believe that the people of Palestine will ultimately come out victorious.

Minhaj Ahmed
Uttara, Dhaka



The AL should never forget that despite different political opinions of different people, today they represent all the people of Bangladesh!

They should respect the opposition, giving them their due position, and not forget "do unto others, what others have not done unto you", ignoring the natural desire of "tit for tat".

This will exemplify their greatness and magnanimity in victory. They must govern impartially without party bias, and face the difficult task ahead without any "fear or favour" to ensure that "truth shall prevail". After all "right and not might is right". Integrity, dedication and honesty should be their motto, for nothing else matters in the long run.

S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Revival of the spirit!

It has been an extraordinary feeling of pleasure and pride to see the revival of the true spirit of my country. At the same time it was one of the loneliest nights of my life as I missed the warmth of my countrymen, while watching all the events of Election 2008 from thousands of miles away. Nevertheless, I certainly could smell the wind of change all around in the most fertile land and minds of the world. The result of the election again reflected the vibrant nature of our motherland where the people have always fought for the truth and justice whenever they were given a chance to do so. People of Bangladesh have shown that they are not divided, for years they have been together to bring the dreams of our freedom fighters into light. Hats off to the new generation, women and men voters of Bangladesh!!!!

The result certainly opens up a new window of opportunity to make all the good things happen in our social and economic lives. I hope there are people to talk about things like the power of secularism, courage, honesty, integrity, vision and painstaking attitude of the common people of our country. Furthermore, I am certain that this is going to be an era of change and modern thinking in Bangladesh. However, I would just like to take the opportunity to point out two important steps that the policymakers of Bangladesh should start to think about immediately. One, people of our country is starving for years; the price hike issue is too much grave to ignore even for a single second. Please do act immediately from the day one and make things happen in our economy, no matter what it takes! And two, uplift the image and pride of the country not only to the outer world but also to the new generation by punishing the

war criminals and terrorists; and by destroying the root of religious extremism with the vigour that the world had witnessed in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Father of the Nation.
Shuddhasattwa Rafiq
Assistant Professor
Jahangirnagar University
Doctoral Student, Curtin
Business School, Australia

Learning English

In Bangladesh students are required to read English for about twelve years. But the level of proficiency they reach is very low. People taking the civil service examination are also tested on their knowledge of English, but the results are equally disappointing. Even those who pass or qualify are hardly able to write freely in acceptable English. Obviously, there is something seriously wrong with the teaching and learning of English in Bangladesh. Most students in this country feel a lack of motivation. There is hardly any subject they know or care to know really well. They are interested not in acquiring knowledge or skill but in passing the exams by memorizing answers. They have the tendency to use short cut to success. Most schools and college teachers are MA in English. It is possible to get a degree in English without having reasonable proficiency in the language. Untrained teachers cannot teach language effectively.

When problems are identified, it should be possible to get round them. Our failure to

learn English arises from certain conditions: Lack of motivation on the part of the students, shortage of competent teachers, unsuitable textbooks and bad and ineffective testing methods. We should overcome these problems for learning English.
Alfat Akter
Dept. of English
IIUC

Accountability and transparency

Since independence successive governments have taken colossal amount of foreign loans from various countries and international organisations.

But unfortunately we have never heard of any accountability and transparency of the foreign loans in the last 37 years.

We are disappointed and shocked that not a single government in power has ever published any comprehensive report or white paper on our foreign loans intentionally or due to negligence of duty and inefficiency.

We strongly feel it is imperative that our government in coordination with our Ministry of Finance and Bangladesh Bank publish a comprehensive report on our foreign loans for the period from the financial year 1971-1972 to 2006-2007 year-wise for information of the members of public in our greater national interest.

O H Kabir
Hare Street
Wari, Dhaka

Harold Pinter: Death & etc

The death of Nobel laureate Harold Pinter is a great loss. He raised his voice against all misdeeds. In his early years he didn't join the Army as a conscientious objector. He strongly opposed the US invasion in Iraq & once he along with Arthur Miller were forced to quit a dinner party in Turkey because he said something for the Kurds in his speech which irritated the establishment.

To be honest, I didn't know his name before 2005 when he won the Nobel for Literature. After that I read almost all of his plays & poetry, courtesy British Council Library. Though most of his plays are bizarre & surreal but undoubtedly those plays have strong messages. But the book "Death & etc." a collection of his poetry & short play is a masterpiece. "The mountain language" has a strong message against the oppressors. Some of the poems in this book are quite rebellious. It's a must read for all.

He's also great admirer of cricket. He's a collector of Wisden Almanac. He collected all Wisden Almanacs ever published. He'd a cricket club of his own.

We lost not only a great writer but also a strong voice. He will live in our hearts forever.

Solaiman Palash
East Jurain, Dhaka

