

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 200 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

Stop bloodshed in Syria

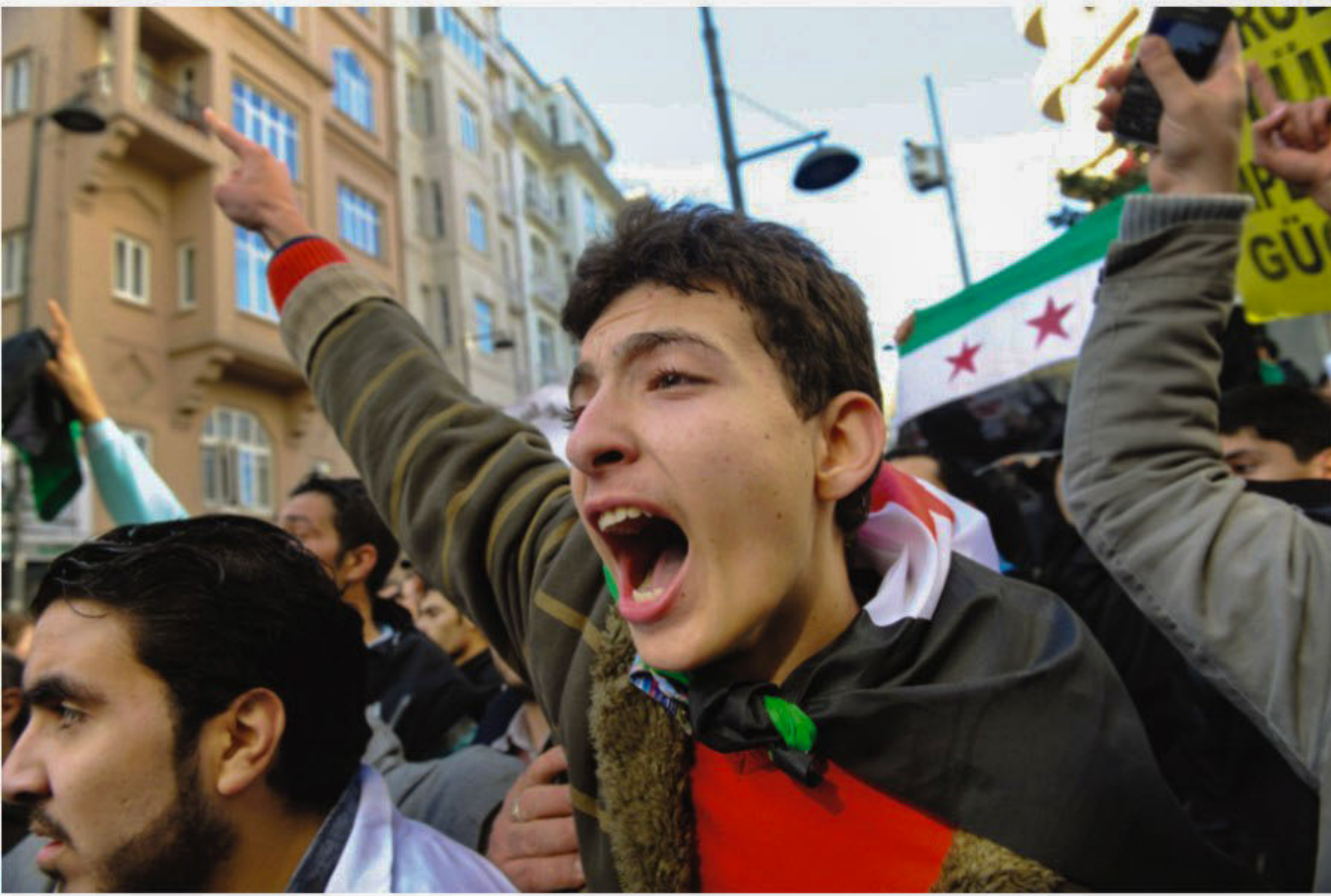


PHOTO: AFP

It seems that Syrian crisis is deepening day by day. The unrest that has gripped Syria since March 2011 has claimed more than 5400 lives. Meanwhile, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has urged the Security Council to overcome differences over Syria and take action to stop a crackdown on dissent. And the latest draft of the resolution strongly condemns violence and human rights abuses by the Syrian government. We have learnt from a recent report published in The Daily Star that the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) members US, UK, France, Germany, Portugal and Morocco have drafted a resolution, which Russia has vetoed, to impose sanctions or authorise military intervention.

Iran, Syria's closest ally in the region, has also appeared in the scene by warning against US and other countries' interference in the affairs of Syria. On the other hand, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, backed by her French and British counterparts and Qatar premier, led the charge recently for tough UN resolution that would call on President Bashar al-Assad to end the bloodshed and hand over power.

So, we fear that all these things might increase the bloodshed by increasing armed conflict in Syria.

Mobarak Ali
RK Mission Road, Gopibagh, Dhaka

AL shouldn't hold programme on March 12

The news titled "AL to take to streets on BNP rally day" published in The Daily Star on February 4, 2012 has upset us deeply.

It has been reported that Quamrul Islam, state minister for law and joint general secretary of Awami League (AL) Dhaka unit on February 2, 2012 said that AL would take hold of all the streets in Dhaka city and no programme of BNP would be successful that day.

This sort of declaration coming from a minister is very unfortunate. Why the government is trying to create a confrontational situation is a mystery to us. The government will not gain anything by doing this, rather it will become more alienated from the people. It is the government's sacred duty to see that people do not suffer but it seems they are least concerned about that.

Therefore, for its own good, the government must refrain from arranging its programme simultaneously on March 12, 2012, the day BNP is going to hold a grand rally. People's sufferings will know no bounds if the government goes ahead with its despicable plan.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong

Even the dead are not safe!

It's really a matter of great regret and pain that some unscrupulous people have involved themselves in a heinous trade of selling human bones. Reportedly, human skeletal remains are sold abroad through an underground black market. According to a news report, remains of 23 persons have been stolen recently from the graves of a village in Gazipur. It has been stated that bone traders in the area had dug a number of graves and stole the dead bodies from there. Gazipur police administration has reportedly taken measures to protect the graves.

The relatives of the dead are deeply shocked at this incident. The question is: What is the reason for this moral degradation? Is it due to social disorder or economic disparity?

Professor M Zahidul Haque
Dean, Faculty of Agriculture
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University
Dhaka

"Traffic jam"

I refer to Hussain Imam's recent open letter to two ministers on the above subject. I am amazed that Mr Imam still has the myopic conception of blaming rickshaws for Dhaka's horrific jams. Has he never been stuck in jams on the so-called VIP roads which have been rickshaw-free for years? Has he never read the opinion of urban experts who blame the soon-to-be-extinct empty/half-empty 500,000+ fossil fuel-run Gas Guzzling Monstrosities (GGMs) running on narrow, pot-holed roads with a capacity for 200,000 GGMs at best, for the jams and air/noise pollution?

As I have repeatedly said in my previous 90 letters, traffic jams are the least of our worries! Just enforce strictly the traffic laws, driving laws and only allow GGMs purchased with white money. The Bat-Ricks and Solar-Ricks are the alternative urban transport for the masses until the illusory Metros, Highways, Fly-ways, Mag-Levs etc become reality to carry our great grandchildren.

Sikander Ahmed
Gulshan-1, Dhaka

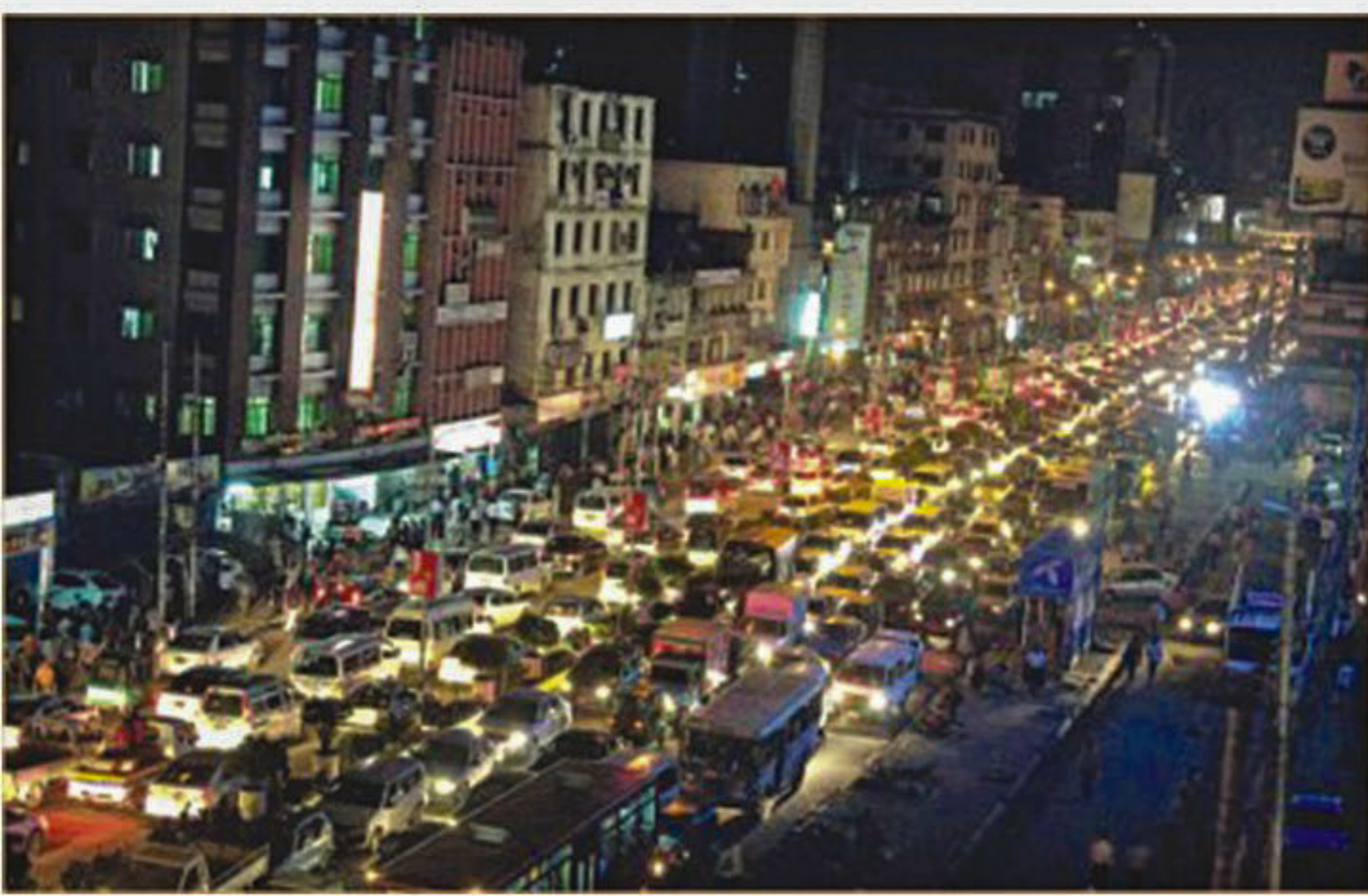


PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Indo-Bangla border incidents

We are quite frequently watching how Bangladeshi nationals are being mercilessly tortured or killed along our border with India. Thankfully, the media has been reporting these incidents faithfully. I would request our media to carry detailed reports on the border killings in the future with particular emphasis on the problems being faced by the border security people of both India and Bangladesh. Investigative journalism is required in this case which may address the following issues:

- Why are such killings occurring mostly along our border with West Bengal and not with Tripura or Mizoram or Assam?
- Do the BSF of India act in accordance with their law?
- Are Indian laws violated when their BSF personnel open fire to stop trespassing?
- Why don't BGB men open fire on Indian nationals who are trespassing on our land?
- Are not our people aware of our border with India?

I think the media can play a vital role in raising awareness among the people living along the border areas.

Mizan -ur- Rahman
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Bill Gates' contribution to humanity

Recent articles and reports published on Bill Gates in all national dailies will hopefully help the effort to reduce, if not remove, the burden of poverty from the world. It is a noble and profound thought coming from one of the world's richest persons! Here is a man, seriously and sincerely trying to lighten some of the misery of the poor that most of us just shrug off and tend to ignore. We all hope and pray that he may live long, and do whatever he can to lighten the load of human misery, help those who have nothing, not even the assurance of the next meal.

Winston Churchill said in his speech in the House of Commons: "Never in the field of human conflict has so much been owed by so many to so few." In this case, never has human misery of so many been lightened by one single person, who is Bill Gates! In the days ahead, we can look forward and hope that his philanthropy is directed to reduce the basic human needs, fight hunger, diseases, provide clothing and shelter for the downtrodden humanity in desperate need. Only then can we bring some small changes to make a little 'heaven on earth.'

S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Ekushey book fair



PHOTO: SAIKAT HOJUMDER / DRINKNEWS

Like other years, Ekushey book fair is being held on the premises of Bangla Academy. This book fair is a great occasion when the readers can browse through the titles of their favourite writers. Surely, this fair promotes the habit of reading--a practice which is feared to be on the wane, especially among the younger generation. It is said that the very existence of book is being threatened by the electronic devices like computer and television.

However, the people of other cities do not get the opportunity to visit such huge book fairs. We hope that similar types of fair will be arranged across the country in the future.

ZabedWali
On e-mail

Sycophancy, Bangladesh style

The comments made by the Bangladesh minister on the inhuman torture of our citizens by the BSF took the nation by surprise. While the video clip shook the Indian media by storm, our minister tried to downplay the gravity of the issue by terming it as an 'ordinary' incident at the border. If the incident was an 'ordinary' one, why the Indian authorities deplored the same and suspended the culprits, will the minister please explain? Even an influential daily Hindu asked for unconditional apology from the Indian government.

By dancing to the tune of the Indian minister Pranab Mukherjee what message did our minister want to convey to the Indians, we don't know. But, certainly, he as a responsible person, failed to echo the national sentiment on the incident. The barbarism of BSF to our citizens knew no bounds only because of the weak-kneed attitude of the responsible persons in the government. The government has already protested to India about the incident, therefore, a responsible person's comment on the incident as 'ordinary' was contradictory.

The horrible sight of dead Felani hanging on the barbed wire, earlier killed by the barbaric BSF, still looms in our memory. We want to convey our message to all concerned that such incidents must be stopped which are clear violation of human rights and, which, India being a democratic country should not allow to happen.

Mohammad Ataul Hoque
On e-mail

Let's love them

The other day, on my way to the public library, I saw some children who were selling books to passers-by. I stopped there to buy a book written by Dale Carnegie. One of them said, "Bhaiya, did you publish our photo in the newspaper? My photo was published many times in several newspapers. Many people come to us, listen to our stories and take our photos. But our fate never changes."

They earn two to three hundred taka a day by selling different things. They have to live on their own. I felt ashamed after hearing their story. Nobody helps them in any way; people just come to them when they need to publish a story on them. My suggestion is, the youth should come forward to help them.

Bipul K Debnath
A student of English department
Dhaka College

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Tuesday's The Daily Star news report headlined "Rapid bus project given go-ahead"

Rana Chowdhury

We need positive and constructive approach towards solving the communications problem of Dhaka city.

Msa

Another eyewash. Another project which will never see the light of day. We have seen how the Dhanmondi project, from Azimpur to Gabtoli, was lost in the files.

Khaled, BEPZA

Planning is easy but implementation is difficult.

Sellma

Why are we thinking of this project when Awami League is planning to shift the airport outside the capital?

Abul Kalam, P.Eng.

As I see in Canada and the US, the slow lane should be the right choice for the MRT, as the buses are supposed to stop at every station and it will not interfere with the traffic in the fast lanes.

Mahbubur Rahman

We need the airport-Sadarghat BRT route first. I also think that fast lane should be for BRT as it would least interfere the traffic. I guess, there would be overpass/underpass at every intersection it crosses. BRT stations should be on elevating structures so that it does not interfere with the traffic and people can use stairs from footpath to reach the station.

Omar Siddiqi

It is stupid to even think about any road-based solution. There is no physical space for any transport to ply Dhaka streets. Adding a few more flyovers and roads is not the solution. We desperately need a metro system.

Razzak

Hope this would improve the present traffic situation in Dhaka.

Prosecuting the BSF

The recent articles posted in The Daily Star in relation to the torture of a Bangladeshi citizen by the BSF men in the Murshabad district of West Bengal have stirred a widespread feeling of helplessness and powerlessness. Despite withstanding so much torture and brutality by the BSF men for so many years, it is extremely saddening to see that we are still not vocal enough to take action for ending the BSF killings and tortures. It is incredible to think that at this day and age, with information at our fingertips 24 hours a day, we are still unable to bring an end to such inhuman activities. I urge Human Rights Watch (HRW) to go ahead in its initiative to prosecute BSF (The Daily Star, front page, Feb 1, 2012) and let BSF know that they may fool some of the people for some time, but not all of the people all of the time.

Amer Junaid
Chartered Accountant (CA)
Melbourne, Australia



PHOTO: AFP