

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.

# Use Bangla officially to honour Language Martyrs



It is the month of Language Movement. In 1952 some of our heroic people sacrificed their lives for upholding Bangla as the state language. According to article 3 of our constitution, "the state language of the Republic is Bangla." But almost in all government and non-government offices English prevails over Bangla! All the documents there are written in English. Sometimes people who do not know English can't figure out what those documents are about.

It is funny that if you ask anyone the date of the Bangla year that day, he/she will fail to answer. This is a shame for us because we are Bangalee and our state language is Bangla. Some of our young people speak English very well but in case of Bangla, they are not so good.

I admit that English is an international language and it has wide recognition all around the globe and so we should know the language well. But being a Bangalee, no language is better than Bangla to me.

To conclude, we all should speak Bangla and ensure that Bangla is used in all government and non-government offices and educational institutions. Otherwise the souls of our language martyrs will never rest in peace.

**Faysal Saleh Al Mahdi**  
Dept. of Law  
University of Dhaka

## Raise entry age for university jobs

Now the retirement age of the public university teachers has been raised from 60 to 65 years. I think the entry age should also be raised from 30 years to 35 years. It may be mentioned here that due to a number of reasons, students fail to complete their courses in due time. Moreover, after graduation from the university, a graduate, in most cases, needs some years to find a suitable job. The PSC also takes quite some time to complete the BCS examinations and recruitment process. The medical and engineering students need more time to complete their respective courses. Under these circumstances, increasing the entry age for becoming university teachers is essential.

In view of the present-day problems and hardship faced by the graduates, I would like to request the authorities including the public university syndicates and senates to consider raising the entry age for becoming university teachers to 35 years.

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

## Persecution of minorities under Islamist Egypt

Kamal Gaballa's article about Egypt told of an 'Arab spring' that began with such high hopes, but ended with a collapse of restraint and the rise of violence that Mubarrak threatened would come if the Islamists had their way. (It is always embarrassing when a dictator is proved right....) Now, despite promises by the new president, an Islamist-backed constitution threatens the rights of minorities and a Christian woman appointed to the Upper House, has resigned

on those grounds.

Egyptian Christians are an estimated 6%-10% of the population and the rise of the Islamists have, there as elsewhere, provided excuses for extremists to kidnap, murder and act violently against individuals, churches and congregations. No wonder people of all faiths and none are extremely concerned about the direction in which the country is heading.

The founder of the non-governmental Christian organisation Association of Victims of Abduction and Enforced Disappearance (AVAED) reports, "In every Egyptian province there is a Salafist association which handles the kidnapping of Christian girls. They have homes everywhere where they keep them. If we inform the police where the kidnapped girl is being kept, they inform the Salafists, who then move her away to another home and then we lose all trace of her." Since January 2011, over 500 Christian girls have been abducted and forced into conversion and marriage. What used to happen occasionally before has now become systematic.

Under Egyptian law, a person may not marry or change their religion until the age of 18 but the lawyer of AVAED says the age of the abducted girls is becoming younger at typically 13-14 years old. One girl was returned after being forced to wear Islamic dress and beaten because she refused to say the Islamic creed but her family and supporters staged a demonstration. But fear of abduction means that her parents, like others, have stopped her going to school.

It seems to prove the truth of the story Jesus told of a man who cleared a devil out of his house but the devil went away and got 7 other devils, worse than himself, and re-occupied the house... It is not enough merely to overthrow a dictator!

**Angela Robinson**  
Baridhara DOHS  
Dhaka

their radical programmes, it will not take long when we might see the emergence of ultra right wing groups to challenge their authority. What will be the fate of the country then?

**Mohammed Shah Alam Khan, Ottawa**

This is unlawful in Islam to use mosque as a political instrument. If a person does not obey the Quran, he is not a Muslim. So how can we say that the members or leaders of Jamaat are real Muslims? They did not obey the Quran, they are lying and killing and destroying properties of the country which are not allowed in the Quran.

**Mohammed Farman Ullah Bhuiyan**

As a responsible daily, The Daily Star should act for the interest of common people. If all the Muslims bring out demonstrations after Jumma prayer, the government should help them to hold the demonstrations properly, as it is helping the demonstrations at Shahbagh.

The government should show neutral and impartial attitude towards all citizens of Bangladesh.

**Freeman**

Jamaat always tries to divert people's attention. In Chittagong University, I saw similar activities of Islami Chhatra Shibir during 1993-1996. Please protect the country from the Jamaat propaganda.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Women in forefront (February 21, 2013)**

**Barkat**

As per the home ministry report, in the last four years there were more than 50,000 reported attacks on women in Bangladesh. There were many more which went unreported. Will the women at Shahbagh demand their punishment too? Or are these women of less importance than those of 1971?

**Anonymous K**

Shahbagh has taught us a lot in the last 16 days and we should salute the spirit of our young generation. It is time our politicians learned from them. Let our two leaders declare their retirement and handover the leadership to the future generation. We, the people, will honour their sacrifices and services for this nation with gratitude.

## Discrimination of Muslims in OIC countries

Ambassador Mahmud Hassan's article (DS Feb 19) on the 12th OIC summit points out well the old adage that 'talk is cheap'. Never mind weightier international issues like the Middle East conflict and Syrian uprising, even much closer to home most OIC members act in a manner that is deplorable. Nowhere in the world are Muslims treated with more legalized prejudice than in oil rich countries surrounding the Gulf, as any Bangladeshi, Pakistani, or Indian Muslim worker on those shores well knows. While the OIC raises a ruckus about supposed apartheid in Israel, the fact remains that in Dubai entire residential neighbourhoods are officially off limits to dark skinned Muslims, while Saudi Arabia officially pays white expatriates more than non-white Muslim ones for the same job with the same qualifications. Lectures about the unity of the Ummah would be funny coming from the OIC except that officially sanctioned discrimination is not a matter of joke. I am sick and tired of oil rich bigots lecturing to anyone about brotherhood and apartheid.

**Esam Sohail**  
Kansas, USA

## Bangladesh's need for strong defence

Lately, there have been a lot of concerns regarding the huge arms purchase of our present government from Russia. Many think it was not necessary as we are not at war with any nation. I personally feel that creating a powerful army is primarily concerned with the balance of power with neighbouring countries. It also contributes to the preservation of peace and stability in a region. If our nation would not have a powerful military force, I believe the killings at our border would be 10 times more and it would encourage the neighbouring countries to invade and occupy our land. Besides, I would also like to suggest our government that before purchasing anything they should conduct a feasibility study about the requirement of such multi-million dollar equipment. They should also study how much it's going to cost to maintain such equipment over the years.

**Aminur Rahim**  
New DOHS  
Mohakhali, Dhaka

## Is Bangladesh a democracy?

In a democracy, the government will be 'of the people, by the people and for the people'. In a democratic country, both the ruling and opposition parties should work together to increase the per capita income of the country. But unfortunately, our political leaders have forgotten the definition of democracy. Now both the ruling and opposition parties are involved in destructive politics. They are not concerned about common people's well-being. We hope both government and opposition will come forward to solve the problems the country is facing at this time.

**Misbah Uddin Sumon**  
Dept. of Tourism and Hospitality Management  
Haji Mohammad Mohsin Hall  
University of Dhaka

# Need for tougher laws against women repression

It is time we stood against the rapists and eve-teasers.

Recently, the home minister informed in parliament that 50,000 women were victims of repression in Bangladesh in the last four years. Of them, 19,422 incidents occurred last year alone. With the recent gang rape of two teenage girls in Tangail and Savar, and one on a running bus in Manikganj, violence against women has been increasing in our country rapidly.

The existing system and loopholes in law are encouraging such crimes. To prevent these heinous crimes, we now need tougher laws and implementation of those laws. Along with legal process, we have to raise social awareness and a united movement against violence against women. That is the way to make the country safe for women.

Without ensuring safety of women, it's not possible to advance a country both politically and economically. So to build a developed Bangladesh we should build a safe society for women and all people.

**Muhammad Sharif Hosen**  
Shanir Akhra, Dhaka



# Hazards of nuclear power plant

Going for a Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) and that too from Russia, having the world's worst safety record of nuclear accidents including the Chernobyl disaster is really a foolhardy decision. Chaudhury's write-up titled "Pros and cons of nuclear power plant", published in DS on 12<sup>th</sup> February, clearly states that since 2011, new NPPs are not being installed anywhere in the world, except for one in USA which already has 104 NPPs! No plants are coming up in Germany, Japan and Canada, among other developed countries. The current trend of investment in power sector is for gas, oil and clean coal fired power plants.

Further it states in the article that between 1952 and 2011 (around 60 years), 33 known (and some unknown) accidents took place in nuclear power plants! This works out to an average of more than one accident every two years! Also, initial capital cost for setting up a NPP, including all safety structures and clearances to be maintained from habitation, is far higher than conventional gas, oil or coal fired or wind, solar and other non-traditional fuel based power plants!

Lastly, least we forget, accidents in NPP have severe long term health and ecological hazards, which could be doubly disastrous for a densely populated and inland location that we have proposed in Bangladesh. It is a potentially dangerous and foolhardy decision, to say the least!

**Engr. S.A. Mansoor**  
Dhaka



Readers' instant comments on The Daily Star online reports. Log on to thedailystar.net to leave your comments.

## Target Friday

Govt takes steps to thwart Jamaat's bid for anarchy (February 21, 2013)

**Shihab**

These so-called anti-liberation ulamas are not doing the right things. Many of them committed punishable offences by actively participating in the killing and oppression of Bangalees during the Liberation War in 1971. They should study politics along with religion, to understand the complex politics of modern world. I feel sorry for them.

**Labu Khan**

I am confused whether Bangladesh is an Islamic or a secular state! Is our nation heading for a war? Islam vs Anti-Islam? Believers vs Non-believers? Our politicians, irrespective of any party, are the main culprits in dividing the nation on the basis of religion. I am afraid if this con-

frontation continues, Bangladesh will soon become a terrorist country like Pakistan.

**Shariful Islam**

The bad efforts of the radical Islamist parties will not be successful as the people of Bangladesh have known their real identities. It is time to tackle them socially. It is time we answered their ill-efforts.

**Dr. Iftikhar-ul-Awwal**

People who wish to see an international standard trial are now apprehensive and so is the international community watching us intently. I, therefore, urge the immediate dispersal of the Shahbagh gathering so that the judges can deliver their judgments independently in peace without any fear or favour. If Shahbagh continues with