

Let's unite and end differences



Another Bangla year has started. The year 1419 added numerous events of achievements to the history of Bangladesh. It was the year when people of diverse cultures gathered together behind one cause. It was the year when we, the Bengalis, revived the spirit of Liberation War. Millions of people lit the candle of hope to get justice after long 42 years of agony.

But there is other side of the coin, too. The nation got involved in a debate. The situation has taken a critical turn. Many educated people have taken the safe side by supporting the opportunist

ists. We have to remember that the more divided we are, the more vulnerable we are. Conspirators have always played with our emotional sentiments towards religion and freedom at the same time. Often we lose our rationality and fight each other.

Let's hope all our misunderstanding with each other will end in 1420 and we will reunite for a better future.

Md. Ahsanul Kabir Palash
*Department of Marketing
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President, if he wills, can save the nation

The country is really at the crossroads. Our twoaders are squabbling blindly. They do not seem to see what harm they are doing to the country. In the meantime a third force has raised its ugly head to take us back to the dark ages. Innocent people are being killed all over the country.

Continuous hartals have already played havoc to the economy. We are feeling deeply insecure at every moment of our life. How is it that nobody is taking any effective step? The only person who can defuse the situation and bring back some normalcy is the President of the Republic.

Constitutionally a president represents all the people irrespective of their political affiliation. He does not belong to any party. It is true that the president acts according to the advice of the prime minister. But the constitution is for the people. After the presidential election is held, the new president should immediately talk to the prime minister and the leader of the opposition and invite them to Bangabhaban for meaningful talks.

Everything including freeing the political prisoners should be done to bring them together. Time is running out fast. The new president can either tow the party line and take path to oblivion or seize the moment like a statesman and save the country from total destruction.

Shahjahan Hafiz
Gulshan, Dhaka

Wake up

They have sown violence and will reap violence. They reap the whirlwind! "Where did we go wrong?" the parents ask. "How could my little darling do this?" Very easily. There are lots of kids out there who are really tormented and , but because their parents are not there for them and don't take the time they need to comfort and take proper care of them, they're pushed over the edge and end up doing such horrible things. They're the product of a nation that has forgotten just where their values are meant to come from. They have turned to money, power and Hollywood for answers, and have been found wanting.

Now the gruesome toll of school shootings involving children who gained access to guns is leading some parents to add another, potentially awkward question about guns to the list. After all, guns, mostly handguns, are present in an estimated 40% of U.S. households. And according to the National Center for Health Statistics, 5,285 kids aged 19 years and under died in gun-related deaths in 1995, the most recent year for which statistics are available.

It's time for parents to wake up to the plight of their children! It's time for parents to see just where they are letting their children go by means of their selfish interests and by not taking time for the kids. Let this be a lesson on taking the time needed to minister to your kids. Do something now, today.

Ted Rudow III, MA
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Readers' instant comments on The Daily Star online reports. Log on to thedailystar.net to leave your comments.

Yunus given rare honour

He dedicates the highest US civilian award to people of Bangladesh w(April 18, 2013)

Md Mozahedul Islam

You took our pride to a new peak. Nation is so proud of you.

Abdur Rahman

We feel honoured and are proud of Dr. Muhammad Yunus. We salute him for the glory he brought for us.

Binodbangali

I hope Sheikh Hasina and Mr. Muhit would have a change of heart to congratulate Professor Yunus. Courtesy costs nothing!

Trybestone

On the contrary, Prof. Yunus should be ready for more trouble from this group of people. It is also very strange and sad that none from the government had time to wish this gentleman for the rare award and honour he brought for Bangladesh. But they have the time of doing cheap public stunt to remain in news and limelight.

Reaz Hassan

In spite of the obstacles still being created by Dr. Yunus, Grameen Bank is functioning more efficiently than ever before. Personally speaking, I feel that he should have retired long ago to pass his days

seeking peace and reconciliation with his inner self. On the contrary, if he still prefers an active public life, he needs to prove his popularity by winning from any one of the constituencies of Bangladesh in the next polls (without the backing of either of the two major political parties). That would vindicate his name and cause as a social reformer and a humanitarian.

Faruk Ahmed

Salute to him! I am proud to be a Bangladeshi.

Vikram Khan

Most of the people of Bangladesh are like Professor Yunus: hard working, sincere and positive. However, religious bigots and political hooligans are endangering the future of our beloved country and ruining the opportunities for us. Thanks, Professor Yunus.

Dr. M. Huq

This is great news and I feel very happy as a Bangladeshi. Dr. Yunus has made us known in the international arena. We are very grateful to him for giving a lot of service to our country through microcredit. But he has not

uttered a single word about the trial of war criminals or the aspiration of the nation. It will only bring good to the nation if he stands for the cause of the nation. Good luck to him and hope that he will have the good sense to be with the people of Bangladesh and show the West that we are proud Bangladeshis.

Zman

Congratulations on his achievement of US Congressional Gold Medal. His concept of social business seems to be a better programme compared to that of microcredit to the poor people (mainly women, in case of Bangladesh), who in return have to bear the burden of quite high interest rate and hence continue to remain poor.

Abdus Sattar

I hope people in Bangladesh, especially the politicians will realise the value and idea of microcredit that Dr. Yunus implemented through Grameen Bank. The United States has realised this and appropriately honoured its inventor.

Mohammed

Dr. Yunus, you have made us proud. Why can't the politicians be like you?

Senior citizen

The world has not lost faith in Prof. Yunus, but we Bangladeshis seem to have! We all should feel tremendously proud that he has brought so much name and fame for our country. Wait to see if he gets another one for 'social economics' by way of Social Business concept that is spreading globally like wild fire. Godspeed, Prof. Yunus!

Abusers of press freedom deserve punishment

I must register my frustration with some recent editorial comments made in The Daily Star about freedom of speech and freedom of the press. In the April 5th editorial regarding jailed bloggers, it says that the constitutional right to free speech "does not give anyone free rein to hurt to religious sentiments of others". In the April 13th editorial dealing with the seizure of Amar Desh and abuses of the freedom of the press, it reads "the answer cannot be to curtail it". These seem to be contradictory sentiments where one right can be restricted for "abuses" and not the other.

While I am not encouraging people to insult the religious beliefs of others, I do believe that people should be free to discuss or debate religion or other issues, including opinions that may be unpopular to some people, without fear of criminal action. The limit of both freedoms should be at the point of inciting violence, which is an unacceptable use of either right.

Many of the people who were "offended" by blog postings or Facebook comments, did not

even see the material in question, but were told of it by others and encouraged to join processions by people with their own motives. The crowd rounded up to protest the individual who is accused of nothing more than "liking" an allegedly questionable posting on Facebook seems particularly excessive. There is also the fact, detailed on a few occasions by The Daily Star, of just how easy it is to create false postings to incriminate others online.

The behaviour of Amar Desh on the other hand, summarized in the editorial, goes above and beyond the reasonable limits of the free press, including publishing false reports and photos for the deliberate purpose of promoting violence. Newspapers are held to a higher standard of integrity and responsibility by the public and in a country like Bangladesh reach far more people than any individual blogs or Facebook pages. There is no question these are the actions of the newspaper in question and they have been far more destructive than those of the bloggers. The bloggers should be freed and Amar Desh punished.

Neil Taylor
On e-mail

Death of a patriot



This nation lost Binod Bihari Chowdhury on 10 April 2013. He lived 104 years. The vision this veteran revolutionary and his comrades possessed during the guerrilla war especially in the days from 1930 to 1934 against the British colonialism in India is rarely seen in today's politicians. We understand from his recent interviews that he was not happy with the present political trend of the country.

Anyway, we know Pakistan was divided from India on the basis of Muslim religious sentiment. But Binod Bihari Chowdhury decided to stay in Pakistan and did not change his decision while many from his religious community migrated to India.

However, later, he gave all-out support to his fellow Bangalees in the 1971 Liberation War to see a secular Bengali republic. Obviously, emergence of Bangladesh made him happy.

But in Bangladesh the sentiment of the independence has been blurred with the ups and downs in politics. Anyway, we hope his struggle throughout his life would rouse patriotism in us, especially in our political leaders to remind them of their moral responsibilities for the motherland. We pay our heartiest tribute to this great warrior.

Mobarak Ali
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Eloquent beauty of silence

I am drawn to Milia Ali's introspective column 'Shouting: A national sport' that appeared recently in The Daily Star (April 7, 2013). It resonates my memorable moments at the Cosmos Club in Washington courtesy Prof. Waldo Sommers of Washington University. It was a full-house lunch hour. The guests were distinguished by three Nobel laureates and a deputy foreign minister of a communist country. The polished black waitresses were busy attending clients so efficiently, their carriage, diction was evidently faultless, and their voice pleasantly at low decibel. Beyond the culinary excellence of the club, what amazed me most was the ambience of silence which I savored intently. Obviously the culture of silence noticeable within the four walls and outside in the West is the precious gift of a cultivated society.

Till date I ardently treasure those moments of the Cosmos Club at a distance of nearly three decades. Shall we ever learn to appreciate the eloquent beauty of silence or its pathological high points and continue to be the land of 'shouting'? Pity.

Syed Badrul Haque
Lalmatia, Dhaka

Punish those adding chemicals to mango

Mango season is knocking around the corner. People of all ages enjoy this delicious fruit. We, the purchasers, should be very cautious about it. From now on, government should raid mango gardens, wholesale spots as well as retail shops to locate mangoes with chemicals. Culprits should be punished on the spot and chemical-mixed mangoes should be destroyed. This will scare the

dishonest sellers of mangoes and as a result the market will be freed from chemical-sprayed mangoes. This will help people enjoy mangoes and at the same time improve our national health.

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