

'Bangla' is also ours

ENAM AHMED CHOUDHURY

RECENTLY, the West Bengal Legislative Assembly passed a resolution renaming the Indian state of West Bengal as 'Bangla' in Bengali, 'Bengal' in English and 'Bangaala' in Hindi/Urdu. As one of the reasons for this momentous change, the Chief Minister of 'Paschim Banga' (the state's current name) mentioned that with the alphabet 'B' in the beginning of the name 'Bengal', the state will get alphabetical priority in Delhi.

Whatever the reasons, the fact remains that the name 'Bangla' or 'Bengal' or 'Bangaala', really belongs to us. This is the traditional name of our motherland and will eternally remain so. Though our country's name officially is 'Bangladesh', historically, geographically, culturally and linguistically, we are 'Bangla' or Bengal. Mainly, we own the glory and achievements of Bengal or Bangla. From time immemorial, the present day Bangladesh was part of 'Bangla', a name derived from 'Banga'. During the Mughal rule, it was part of Subeh-Bangla. During the British rule, Calcutta was initially made the capital of India (till 1911) and also the provincial capital, and the province of British Bengal (called Bengal Presidency) included the territories that now comprise both Bangladesh and Paschim Bangla (West Bengal).

The area and the population of Bangladesh are much higher than that of West Bengal. Through history's bloodiest but most glorious Liberation War, we won 'Banglar Swadhinata' - the independence of Bangla. This Bangla is Bangladesh, our sovereign independent country. The slogan of our Liberation War was *Joy Bangla*. Our national anthem begins with an emphatic proclamation of our love for *Shonar Bangla* - the Bengal of gold. This is not just the national anthem, but the central source of our inspiration. Our national academy is called Bangla Academy. The Bengal Foundation set up by Abul Khair, and many other institutions named likewise are dedicated to the propagation of the arts and music of Bengal. We are 'Bangalee' as we live in Bengal. Our state language is Bangla. In remembrance and in recognition of our great state language movement, February 21 has been accepted universally as the World Mother Language Day. Introduced by Mughal Emperor Akbar, we observe the first day of Baishakh as our national New Year's Day. Our music is *Banglar gaan*, our seasons are seasons of Bengal, our animals are the Bengal goat and the Bengal tiger, our culture is Bangla,



our products are Bangla products, our rivers are rivers of Bengal, our cuisine is Bangla. One of our great national leaders A. K. Fazlul Huq is called 'Sher-e-Bangla' - the tiger of Bengal. The Parliament area in Dhaka is known as 'Sher-e-Bangla' Nagar. In our vision, the picture that eternally flashes as our motherland is the face of Bangla - Banglar mukh. We appreciate Bangalees living in different parts of the world, including India, sharing our glory and pride. Indeed, there are many commonalities. But this does not mean that anyone can hijack the name Bengal or Bangla from us for exclusive use. That is our name, our existence, our identity.

Moreover, the specific use of Bangla or 'Bengal' as the name of Paschim Bangla will give rise to unnecessary problems, including legal, both in the national and international arena. Henceforth, Paschim Bangla may brand some of their specific products and processes as products of Bengal and ask for registration as exclusive patents,

trademarks or copyrights from the relevant agencies of WIPO or WTO or any other authority. Because of Paschim Banga's claim of the name Bangla or Bengal, any such move on our part is not likely to succeed. At the very least, this could create great confusion, detrimental to our interests.

The issue, which is a very serious one, should be taken up both officially and unofficially, for a mutually acceptable solution. The central government of India, I believe, is yet to give its final approval. Since this involves the interests of Bangladesh, we would expect the government of India to give neighbourly considerations and consult our government in this regard. Public opinion, conveying our anxiety, may also be voiced. Issues of this nature have been settled amicably or otherwise solved in the case of Korea, and previously Vietnam and Germany, and even in Punjab shared by India and Pakistan. Thousands of ventures, initiatives,

societies and enterprises of Bangladeshi entrepreneurs all over the world are named or known as 'Bangla' endeavours. On a safari trip in a remote South African Game Reserve, traveller Shimu Nasser (as reported with a photograph on the September 9 issue of *Prothom Alo*) found a big grocery store called 'Bangla Superstore' located near the entry point, owned by two young men from Feni. In an unfrequented small beach town in Scotland, I recently ran across a restaurant owned by a gentleman from Sylhet named 'Taste of Bengal'. There are countless such instances. Most of our restaurants abroad (and these are aplenty) serve, what they call, Bangla cuisine, (albeit, partly Mughal) and Bangla sweets. The recent victories of young girl footballers from Bangladesh were hailed as triumphs of Bengal tigresses. All these, of course, should and would continue. But renaming West Bengal exclusively as Bangla or Bengal will definitely create great confusion and should be avoided by all means.

The best solution, of course, is continuation of the present practice of officially calling the country (independent) and the territory (in India) as Bangladesh and Paschim Banga, respectively. Alternatively, without trying to lay exclusive claim on the name Bangla or Bengal, Paschim Bangla may like to be called Indian Bengal or Bharatiyo Bangla or simply 'Banga'. During the debate in the West Bengal Assembly, many members of the Congress, CPI and even BJP expressed their preference for the name 'Banga'. Even Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on record stated that she did not dislike the name 'Banga', but it was not so much in use anymore. However, if 'Banga' is accepted as an official name, it would obviously be used. Another alternative for consideration could be the name Bangla Pradesh (BP), like UP (Uttar Pradesh), Madhya Pradesh (MP), Himachal Pradesh (HM) and Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP).

In any case, there should be an amicable settlement of the issue. The decision should not be taken arbitrarily and unilaterally. In the meantime, we should vigorously keep on using 'Bangla' or 'Bengal' as the commonly used name of our motherland. Otherwise, in the process of history, we will eventually move far away from our traditional name and identity, and thereby lose our source of glory and pride.

The writer is a columnist and former chairman of the Privatisation Commission.

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Gory scenes that should have been avoided

SARAH ANJUM BARI

THIS Eid, news updates and social media were flooded with gory images of the roads across some parts of Dhaka city. Accustomed as we all are to the sacrificial rituals of Eid-ul Azha, the concoction of stagnant rainwater and animal blood coursing through the streets was altogether too grotesque to tolerate, especially on an auspicious and festive occasion as Eid. It begs the question of how such a situation was allowed to have surfaced; more importantly, how some people of this city could go so far as to deem the morbid debacle "artistic".

Every year we have been used to the stench and stains of animal blood and innards permeating the city after Eid rituals. Yet that did not make it any less shocking to watch as a combination of incessant rain, insufficient drainage and poor awareness measures resulted in a city marked red with the deluge of blood-soaked rainwater.

The appearance of the images on social media immediately sparked expected discussions of how Dhaka lacks the sufficient drainage system that could have prevented such scenes. As of June 2015, there were about 2.5 thousand water bodies and ditches in Dhaka; but it takes just a stroll around the city to notice how most of these remain congested with waste. It comes as no surprise that heavy rainfall would go on to flood our streets on a day already marked for additional waste in public areas.

While tackling Dhaka's drainage issues is a long-term issue, the city corporation's initiative to provide sites for the animal sacrifices on Eid was



indeed noteworthy. Dhaka North and South Corporations were respectively allotted with 567 and 583 slaughter sites, along with the distribution of bio-degradable bags at cattle huts and information regarding available slaughter spots and the rates of butchers and imams on municipality websites. What's baffling is why the general public seems to have been unaware of such initiatives.

The city corporations should have spread enough media awareness regarding their measures, especially the

availability of slaughter houses. In all probability many people would have taken them up on the offer and moved their Eid rituals to these sites, relieving the city of the harmful waste that is likely to cause diarrhoea, cholera, hepatitis and other water-borne diseases, especially for residents of the outskirts subject to poorer drainage facilities.

We're all too quick, however, to always point the finger at authorities and the parties "officially" responsible for taking care of the city, conveniently

forgetting that we happen to be responsible for it too. While some of us may indeed have been unaware of the initiative, how many would actually have made use of it if it were more effectively publicised? Despite the obvious knowledge about the after effects of improper disposal of animal waste, animal sacrifices were seen to have been carried out at residential parking lots and streets in several parts of the city, with certain especially gruesome examples. Nazmul Abedin, a 23 year-old Dhaka resident, had to stop

his car on his way to the outskirts because a recently sacrificed cow was right in the middle of the street, half submerged in bloody rainwater.

Bangladesh being home to a mostly Muslim population, the sacrifice of cattle is a core part of our religious beliefs and rituals. Those same rituals also demand that the animals not be slaughtered in the company of others animals - and that they essentially be treated with respect. It is shameful how some people have stooped to making social media posters out of the blood of sacrificed living beings.


Recent news updates and the consequent outcrop of filtered images of the coloured water on social media have tried to make light of the situation, implying that the original pictures were doctored and the spectacle was false. As much as we would like to believe that, the firsthand accounts and authentic images captured by eyewitnesses verify the uncomfortable truth.

While we hope that city officials will continue in their efforts to improve the sanitation and waste management systems with better resources and awareness campaigns in order to prevent future repetition of such hazardous scenarios, we must remember that a handful of government representatives will never succeed in keeping a city clean if the majority of its residents continue to soil it. If we want a clean city, we have no right to add to the dirt, and least of all to glorify it - whatever colour it may be.

The writer is a student of Economics at North South University.

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QUOTABLE Quote



JOHN A. SHEDD
American Author, Professor

A ship in harbor is safe, but that is not what ships are built for.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Telegraph period
- 5 Monster
- 10 Criminal outing
- 12 Nostalgic song
- 13 Musical drama
- 14 Criticizes
- 15 Score half
- 16 "--a deal!"
- 18 "Vamoose!"
- 19 Louisiana school
- 21 Prejudice
- 22 Shaw play
- 24 Merits
- 25 One Direction members, e.g.
- 29 Excellent
- 30 Bavarian city
- 32 Meringue start
- 33 Cool, to jazzmen
- 34 You, to Simone
- 35 Clearly stunned
- 37 Express gratitude to
- 39 "Love Story" writer
- 40 Gold unit
- 41 Market direction

42 Peer group?

DOWN

- 1 Composer Joplin
- 2 Wrap, as an ankle
- 3 Without pretense
- 4 A pop
- 5 Head honcho
- 6 Wing
- 7 Slow passage
- 8 Monkey
- 9 Lab activity
- 11 1988 Tom Cruise film
- 17 4:00 perhas
- 20 Be of one mind
- 21 Plains grazers
- 23 Preceded
- 25 Pooh's pal
- 26 Hire
- 27 Peptitive chant
- 28 Torch holder
- 29 Big meal
- 31 Woodland walks
- 33 Occupied
- 36 Scathing review
- 38 Shade

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

P	R	I	E	R	A	M	I	S	H
L	A	M	E	R	T	E	M	P	O
A	M	P	L	E	T	A	P	I	N
C	A	R	A	B	I	L	E	N	E
I	D	O	M	A	R	E	D		
D	A	V	E	Y	E	A	S	T	
I	O	N	S	R	O				
A	S	S	E	T	K	N	O	T	
S	P	A	M	A	O	K	A	R	E
P	O	T	T	E	R	S	T	I	N
E	L	I	A	S	C	R	I	E	S
C	L	O	N	E	A	T	O	N	E
S	O	N	G	S	R	E	N	T	S

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker



BEETLE BAILEY: ARE YOU OKAY, BEETLE?
SOLDIER: I THINK I HURT ALL OVER
BEETLE BAILEY: HE THINKS?!

BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott



MAN: DAD, I THINK WE SHOULD GET A RIDING LAWN MOWER.
CHILD: WHY?
MAN: SO I COULD USE IT TO TORTURE ZOE AND SPREAD FEAR AND DESTRUCTION IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.
CHILD: I'D EVEN LET YOU USE IT TO CUT THE GRASS IF YOU WANT!