

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.

Secret of Iran's power

While dealing with Iran one thing must be taken into consideration. It is that Iran's existence as an Islamic state is a miracle, given the repeated aggression and embargo imposed on it. Another miracle is that unlike Iraq Iran is not becoming an easy target of the imperialists. Enjoying relative political stability, Iranians are united under one Imam inspired and directly guided by Imam Mahdi who they believe is in occultation. Though these religious facts are beyond comprehension for western writers and thinkers, it is very much there. I cannot resist the temptation of quoting the famous line from Shakespeare: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

Besides that arcane fact, Iran can boast of an unusual military, scientific and technological acumen especially in nuclear science. However, Iran has time and again said that their nuclear reactors are aimed at generating energy and not nuclear arms and their claim is substantiated by even American National Intelligence Estimate. Iran's view is that as the use of nuclear bomb is sure to cause huge collateral damage, it is un-Islamic. Still the western forces are preparing the ground for another all out war on Iran. They have already started the aggression in the form of killing Iran's nuclear scientists and imposing stringent sanction on Iran's oil sale.

Actually, the west does not want the Muslim countries to be too independent in knowledge and military power to depend on the West for help. It is time the so-called torch bearers shun



PHOTO: AFP

their hubris and admit the reality that Muslims are changing very fast for the better as it is being observed in Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Tunisia and other Middle East countries.

Abdus Subhan, On e-mail

Treating E.coli with low voltage AC

Emergence of lethal and highly virulent strains of Escherichia coli (E.coli) has become a serious threat to food safety and public health. Some strains of E.coli bacterium such as, Escherichia coli O157:H7, Shiga-like toxin-producing E. coli (STEC), etc., produce Shiga-like toxin or verotoxin which is a major cause of food-borne illness. Each year thousands of people are affected by E.Coli bacterium by eating contaminated beef and other food products. Infection with these lethal bacteria cause severe diarrhoea, dehydration and kidney problems which often lead to death of children and elderly people or long term health problems.

The good news is, low voltage alternating current (AC) treatment can effectively kill E.coli. According to a study conducted by Ajit Mahapatra and colleagues at Fort Valley State University in Georgia and Virginia Tech, recently published in the International Journal of Food Safety, Nutrition and Public Health, application of a low voltage alternating current to beef samples inoculated with large number of lethal E. coli can almost completely deactivate the bacteria.

Perhaps the above mentioned finding would help reduce contamination of beef and other food stuff by lethal E.coli bacterium.

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

Bangladesh cricket team's Pakistan tour!

I am concerned with the recent decision of BCCB to send our national cricket team to Pakistan. When the world cricketing nations have boycotted playing in Pakistan due to security reasons, I am astonished at the BCCB's decision. I presume it's more like a barter trade that Bangladesh will send its team to Pakistan and in return Pakistan will support Bangladesh candidate in the ICC presidential race. What I gather from my friends in BCCB is that this decision has been taken at the whim of its president who is aspiring to take over the ICC's highest job. Why are we making our innocent players a sacrificial lamb for the personal gain of the BCCB president?

I would request our government to intervene in this matter and tell BCCB to cancel this tour, as we do not owe anything to Pakistan to undertake this risky tour in their troubled country.

Shahed jamil

Hazare's demand is not Gandhian!

Veteran Indian social activist Anna Hazare termed his anti-corruption campaign as the second freedom struggle of India. Hazare's attire, made of white homespun cotton, reminds us of Mahatma Gandhi, who led the 'Quit India' movement against the British rule in 1942. Hazare also said that after ensuring the institution of a strong Lokpal (ombudsman) with its own independent investigative team, the next fight will be for the "Right to Reject" provision which will ensure that the corrupt MPs will not get entry into the "sacred temple of democracy".

However, it is undeniable that such a move would be tantamount to creating a separate, unelected executive that is not accountable to parliament or the Indian people.

Famous Indian writer Arundhati Roy said that the Jan Lokpal Bill, which she said nobody had read, was totally a non-Gandhian piece of legislation and it would concentrate power in the hands of a few.

Let us watch and learn how India finds out effective solution to its crisis because Bangladesh is also suffering from deep-rooted corruption.

Mobarak Ali

RK Mission Road
Gopibagh, Dhaka



PHOTO: AP

Beware of child pickpockets

The other day while I was riding down the main road from Ibrahimpur to Mirpur 14 on my motorbike in the evening, I noticed a very young boy, probably below 10 years of age, clinging behind a running rickshaw ahead of me. This type of scene is very common, so I didn't pay much attention to it. When I was about to cross that rickshaw, I noticed there was a woman on the rickshaw and the boy suddenly put something on the back of her head and swiftly opened the zipper of her handbag. It happened so fast that I was puzzled. And as soon as I realised that he was a pickpocket, I yelled to draw the lady's attention and tried to catch the kid. But I failed as he quickly ran away.

What troubles me is, even if I could capture the little thief, what would I do with him? He was too little to be handed over to the police. Assaulting him wouldn't have been a civic thing to do either. Should I then have tried to calmly explain it to him that what he did was wrong? I doubt if such persuasion would stop him from doing this again. I guess we have no choice but to be careful about our belongings when we ride in public transports.

Khaled Mohammed

Mirpur, Dhaka

Separate TV channel for children

Television can be a source of knowledge and education for children if they are properly guided by their parents. The children should be allowed to watch particular TV programmes for a specific duration which can help them develop their imagination.

As there are not many TV shows dedicated for children, they watch programmes meant for the adults. It is high time the authorities concerned took appropriate measures to establish a separate TV channel for children in the country.

Md. Asiful Alam

Department of EEE

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Dhaka

Harijans are our brothers

Harijans are neglected everywhere in the country. They are still considered as untouchables. Often in the newspapers we read horrible stories of their lives. I do not find any logic behind all these happenings.

It's regrettable that they are not even allowed to enter the temples and their children are not allowed to get admitted to schools. And our leaders have hardly paid any attention to solve their problems. Don't we have any responsibility towards them? There is no way to underestimate the service they provide to society. The caste system must not have any place in this era of globalisation. We should learn to respect every person in the society.

The change in our attitude should get the greatest emphasis. Our heartlessness and discriminatory attitude must be replaced with a warm and brotherly one. We should ensure that they have access to every public place.

Pradip Das

Lecturer, BHPI



PHOTO: STAR

Power corrupts...

Your front page report published on January 18th on the Lokman killing at Narsingdi is very revealing about the power of our ministers, which, unfortunately, they use for the wrong reasons! Within two hours of the magistrate's order to send him to jail, pending trial, possibly a telephone call from the high-ups, had him released on bail!

Meanwhile, adding salt to the wounds of the victim's family members, they are being intimidated by the murderer and his gang, so that they may not proceed further to seek justice! Is this not a clear case of 'justice denied' and the due process of law obstructed by 'string pulling' by powerful quarters? It only justifies the adage that: "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely!"

The 'powers that be' cannot do something that is needed and establish justice, but apt to meddle in matters of law and order and justice misusing their powers!

We can only look, listen and learn about the "wheels within wheels" that can turn black into white and 'night into day.' Is the Prime M aware of this? Small wonder the government the World Bank and other international bodies do not trust the government.

Third Person Singular Number, Dhaka

New gas connections in city

At present the authorities are not giving any new gas connections to the newly constructed houses and apartments in Dhaka city. But fortunately, the owners are getting gas connections from the old lines which were installed at the plots in question before the construction started with the help of some dishonest staff of the gas company.

As a result, the government is not getting revenue, though the employees of the company concerned have got an extra source of income. The government should look into the matter.

Uttam

Dhanmondi

Dhaka

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Tuesday's The Daily Star news report headlined "Not coup but mass upsurge"

Dev Saha

Caretaker government is fine but taking down the government by force is not a mature idea. Awami League will resort to do the same thing in the future too. This country needs to go beyond these two female leaders.

Manzoor Ashraf

These demonstrations are harmful for our fragile economy.

Kazi Salim

Khaleda Zia should go to the parliament because she was elected from five constituencies without any hindrances. BNP's main intention is to spoil the ongoing war crimes trial.

Sellma

We do not want this street politics. We want the BNP leaders in JS where they must express their views and opinions.

Dr Islam

We would like to know from the leader of the opposition, if the election is held under a caretaker government, then what are her plans for the welfare of the people and the country's development? Unfortunately, her last tenure was not at all a pleasant experience for the common people of this country.

Md. Mizanur Rahman

I hope the government will restore caretaker government to conduct a fair election. Otherwise, the country will face political and economic crisis. So the government should reconsider this.

Mizanur Rahman

Restoration of caretaker government is a good issue but BNP could discuss this in parliament. I disagree with the BNP leader that a free and fair election is not possible under this government. We have seen the city corporation elections of Chittagong, Narayanganj and Comilla where the Awami League government has set a good example. They should resolve this issue through discussion. People never want to see confrontational politics.

Upfront

I am a citizen of Bangladesh. I request our opposition leader to kindly put in details the framework and modalities of operation of the caretaker government she wants to have before the election.

Anonymous

Tell people what you want to do for them and not how you will bring down the government. Please put the proposal in a concrete form.

Iftikhar-ul-Awwal

Such mass gatherings create mass panic and strangle public life. No doubt, the caretaker government system is now a national issue and the government has to accommodate the provision at the earliest to ease political tension building up in the country. The sooner it is understood the better for all of us



PHOTO: AMIRUL RAJIV