

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.

River linking by India



The river linking project of India that involves linking 30 major rivers and diverting the water of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra is a mega plan first devised in 1980 by India that envisages the project will increase its irrigation coverage from 120 million to 160 million hectares and multiply crop production. But India seems to be quite indifferent to the havoc the project will wreck on the agriculture, environment and ecology of the neighbouring countries, especially Bangladesh. A recent report, published in The Daily Star referring to the study conducted by a team of experts, highlighted the dark side of the Indian river linking plan on Bangladesh, as it would cause "saline death" to half the country. The impact assessment report forecasts ecological disaster for our beloved motherland, death of Teesta and three other rivers, decline in river water and sedimentation, rise in salinity of soil, surface and ground water, damage to agriculture, fisheries, navigation routes etc.

As a nation we will be divided again about the disastrous impact of this Indian river linking plan on Bangladesh. After experiencing the impact of Farakka Barrage and India's refusal to Teesta Agreement, some of us even now believe the verbal assurance that India will not do anything that brings any adverse effects on Bangladesh. But we should take note how all Indians and their political parties are united in protecting their national interest. Even the Indian Supreme Court ordered a quick implementation of the river linking project and appointed a high powered committee to chase the government. My urge to our government and the judiciary, please wake up and do something to save the country and its unlucky people!

Engr. Md. Aminul Hoque
East Rampur, Dhaka

ISI money to BNP leader!

This relates to BNP officials asking for proof about ISI (Pak) giving money to their leader! The matter has come up in the judicial inquiry going on in Pakistan about political and military related matters there.

It was published in their dailies and then most dailies in Bangladesh published this in the last few days. So the matter is not totally baseless; or 'a pie in the shy' as the saying goes!

If the BNP leader is guilt-free, then she should take up the matter judicially. And since it involves transnational issues, why doesn't she sue the Pakistan ISI in the International Court of Law? That will be legal and logical; instead of just making hue and cry about it; as it is now public knowledge! Why does not the BNP leadership take up this matter in the proper legal and logical way? Or is BNP incapable and not fully sure of the matter themselves; then it will remain a popular barb against them; come next general election!

An observant voter, On e-mail

Bravo Bangladesh!

Baffled by beguiling bowling
battered by blazing batting,
beaten by babes Bangladesh,
big, brash, blue-bedecked boys,
bawl boo-hoo.

Disaster affected children

Davender Kumer's article about the devastating earthquake and tsunami, which hit Japan on 11 March last year, published in this daily on 11 March this year focused on an important issue, that many survivors could be going through serious emotional distress in silence without seeking any help.

It is said that this earthquake was one of the most powerful in recorded history. It also created such a severe emotional impact on its survivors that has not happened since the Second World War.

However, Japan has launched a robust response to tsunami damage to return to 'business as usual' within five years. But missing, as the article says, from the equation is any discussion to comprehensively address the emotional and psychological needs of the survivors. Child's right organisation Plan has come across deeply disturbing stories of children affected by the disaster, such as being scared to flush toilets as it reminds them of tsunami waves.

However, it is noteworthy that the perceived social duty to be resilient and common confusion of psychological care with mental illness in Japan means those in real need may never seek any help. Stoicism might build this mindset. So the psychotherapists are evolving ways to reach the people suffering from emotional distress.

Anyway, disaster management organisations/departments should learn lessons and methods from this experience. However, after a disaster hits a place in the world, irrespective of poor and rich region, emotional distress of the survivors, especially the children, should be considered as a humanitarian need and it must not be ignored.

Mobarak Ali
RK Mission Road, Gopibagh, Dhaka



Congratulation, Tigers!

We greet the players, the coach and the officials of the Bangladesh national cricket team, as they have presented the nation another excellent win against India. Bangladesh cricket team has done what we craved for a long time! Congratulations to Sakib, Tamim, Musfique and Nasir Hossain as well as the whole cricket team for winning the match.

I believe if they have the confidence, the Tigers can defeat any team. We pray for their success in the remaining matches of Asia Cup.

Rafik Alamgir
Department of ELL
International Islamic University Chittagong

Political clash inevitable!

My beloved country is in great danger because of political instability. There are some positive and negative perceptions about the caretaker government system but people in general cannot think of a fair election under any political government in Bangladesh. Political parties hold different opinions on this issue. The opposition alliance is holding huge programmes demanding the restoration of caretaker government but the government is determined not to give in to their demand. Politicians should think about the interest of the country and work together for holding a free and fair election, otherwise a shocking consequence is waiting.

Abdur Rahman
M Phil researcher
Department of International Relations
Jahangirnagar University

Won over

Whether Wall Street was corrupted by greed and excess--more than three years after the financial crisis, the perception that little has changed on Wall Street -- and that no one has been held accountable for the risk-taking that led to the crisis -- looms large in the public consciousness.

So, little by little, the sceptics are won over to invest their funds, to take a chance on making more money, for the rebounds are relatively quick. And there is a rebound, for there are still people to be convinced that things will keep going up -- indeed, must keep going up. They too must be won over and convinced to overextend themselves little by little. It is a gradual process of boom, then downturn, then bigger boom, then another downturn. The downturn will become a recession, the recession will become a depression, and the depression will become the Crash.

Ted Rudow III, MA
Encina Ave

"Tigers gatecrash Tendulkar's party"



PHOTO: AFP

What is being projected as Sachin Tendulkar's 100th international ton is essentially his 49th ODI century! By clubbing all Test and ODI centuries of Sachin together, it is being established that his innings of 152 against the minnows Namibia at Peitermaritzburg during 2003 World Cup is at par with his innings of 148 not out at Sydney Test against the mighty Australians in 1992! If this is indeed an "honour" or another "feather in the cap" of Sachin, then so be it!

Now that Sachin has at last come up with that elusive 100th ton; we will cleverly, zealously and "patriotically" forget his consistent drastic failures in both Tests and ODIs through series after series and also not mind a bit even if India fails to win the Asia Cup! After all personal milestones and statistical jugglery get accorded much higher priority than the welfare of the team in this cricket-fanatic nation named India! So, no question arises regarding gate crashing of Sachin's party!

Rather, we will definitely rejoice over a personal record by completing ignoring the hard reality that the "mighty" Indians have got defeated atrociously by the brave Bangalees who might fare lowly as far as hype is concerned, but possesses a much larger and gallant heart than the Indians.

Since the selfish mission of the spent-force has ultimately got achieved at the expense of fortunes of the team, Sachin should call it a day immediately after the ongoing Asia Cup and pave way for new blood. Else he should be promptly sacked from the team. However, it is too much to be expected from the hypocrite selectors and the Board mandarins who do not hesitate in barbarically forcing the "aged" Sourav Ganguly to quit the arena in 2008 despite the southpaw's average of 54 in his last Test series; but allow the "kid" Sachin the luxury of retiring on his own terms, even in 2012, despite string of scandalous failures!

Kajal Chatterjee
Peerless Nagar
Kolkata-114, India

The 11th March at parliament

In the national assembly on 11th March, MP Tarana Halim gave a speech based on the thanks giving note of the president, where she asked the public and voters to give another chance to the present government to accomplish its ongoing activities.

Here I would like to remind not only Tarana Halim but also all the MPs that democracy is for the people who are the main source of power. Our people have proved it many times. So, I would request you to pay attention to what the general people are thinking about the current situation of Bangladesh.

The poor labourers who live from hand to mouth, the local bus passengers, the general public, the joggers at Chandrima Udyan, the educated society, all of them have something to say. Please try to listen to their views and kindly say publicly what you are doing about their needs.

Mamun Hai

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Sunday's The Daily Star news report headlined "Delhi now keen to resolve bilaterally"

Rch

Only an impartial international court will do justice to all. India does not want it. Bangladesh must go to the UN for resolving all the issues.

Mark Akmat

If Bangladesh is a sovereign country, which it is, it cannot accept the sugar-coated words of the Indian High Commission, as India has almost always broken all bilateral agreements by not implementing all their clauses or not ratifying those at the right time. Take the example of border killing. Killing of the Bangladeshis at the border almost every week seems to be a common practice by the BSF.

So, our government must work first bilaterally within a stipulated time and then go to the international court to settle maritime boundary, river water sharing and other border issues before the tide of the current win over maritime dispute with Myanmar dies down.

Asif

We have had enough experience resolving issues bilaterally with India. We know how much respect India shows to our demands. This is yet another trick played by India.

Anonymous

I would request our government to consider all pros and cons before agreeing to bilateral discussion. It could turn into a loss for us.

Riaz Ahmed, UK

Stronger countries prefer bi-lateral negotiations when they find themselves in a weaker position either legally or morally. They know that decision by a judge will very likely be against them. India always preferred a bilateral negotiation with Pakistan on Kashmir and Israel on Palestine issues and we know what the results have been. Indians are seasoned negotiators and the nature of the current Bangladesh government is a supplicant one. On that basis, a bilateral negotiation will not be advantageous for us. Our preference should therefore be either arbitration or international law.

Imtiaz Karim, DU

Bilateral solution always remains open to be violated by any party, since this is mere understanding, rather than verdict. India, supported by a barrage of smart diplomats and policy makers, has very quickly understood their weaker position and resorted to bilateral conduit to save the face for the time being.

Jalal

We urge our government not to surrender to this idea. Again India will play a trick in the name of bilateral settlement.

Roney

What prompts India suddenly to be keen to solve it bilaterally? How many issues were solved bilaterally in the last 40 years? The ball is now in Bangladesh's court. We should use this chance properly.

Abul, UK

We think it would be unwise and suicidal for us to accept India's proposal. If they were sincere they would withdraw their unjust claim and then might approach for bilateral discussion. Their navy is already patrolling inside our sea boundary. We are worried about our government's policy towards India.

Sheikh Monirul Islam, Opee

It is a trap. We must not fall into this trap as we have much better chance to go to UN and achieve what we achieved in case of Myanmar. If India were keen to solve it bilaterally, they would do it long before. We should go to the international court rather than wasting our time negotiating with India.

Truth Teller

India is just trying to play the delay game. But we are not fools. We do not want to wait for another forty years. Let the international