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# Revisiting our glorious past

Back-to-back visits to the Lalbagh Fort and Ahsan Manzil on consecutive days right at the beginning of the New Year were refreshing as well as enlightening. We saw the stateliness and the splendour of the lifestyle of the past Nawabs of Bengal. Among other things, we wondered how the soldiers moved about donning the iron-clad coat of arms. The weapons, utensils, pieces of furniture and all the other artefacts literally took us back in time. The phrase 'As if history unfolded before our very eyes', often used in the essay of 'A Visit to a Place of Historical Interest' actually materialised before us.

The disconcerting aspect of visits, however, was the way history was being preserved and placed before the world. Many places were sealed off. I am sure; more of the history of our proud past could be put forward. There was hardly any docent and even if there were, all they would do was to walk with us and warn us not to take pictures. The places were littered and they were being treated more as just an open space or a park to spend some time in, than make the visitors to revisit the magnificent part of history that they are. We have no dearth of historians who can help in the proper preservation and in putting up a fitting portrayal of these places, as they truly deserve. It is high time we gave due importance to the past that we should be proud of.

Tasnim Jara  
Dhaka Medical College  
Dhaka



Lalbagh Fort

# Rehabilitate beggars



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Beggars are seen everywhere in Dhaka i.e. on the streets, in parks, marketplaces, in front of mosques and in residential areas. These people are mostly physically impaired and old, street urchins and professional beggars. When cars stop at the traffic signal, beggars gather around and keep knocking. If they happen to see any foreigners, they stick to them like bees. A couple of months ago, one of my foreign friends went to the central Shaheed Minar near Dhaka Medical College. He told me how beggars disturbed him. So, begging can tarnish our country's image among the foreigners.

We even read in newspapers that there are some godfathers who have been bringing disabled people to Dhaka and putting them at different places for begging. I would like to request the government to take an effective rehabilitation programme and declare Dhaka as a beggar-free city.

M.A. Kashem  
Mohammadpur, Dhaka

# God hates war

The Pentagon has officially removed the longstanding military ban on women in combat. Defence Secretary Leon Panetta formally announced the move on Thursday in Washington: "It's clear to all of us that women are contributing in unprecedented ways to the military's mission of defending the nation. Women represent 15 percent of the force: over 200,000.

They're serving in a growing number of critical roles on and off the battlefield. The fact is that they have become an integral part of our ability to perform our mission."

In being officially allowed to serve in combat roles, women will be afforded opportunities for medals of recognition as well as for advancement to positions they have been unable to pursue.

It illustrates the blatantly hypocritical policies of the U.S. and its allies. I don't believe in war. I don't believe in killing my fellowman.

Violence breeds violence, and he or she that lives by the sword shall die by the sword. The true God is a good God who is kind and loving, concerned. God hates war and its rich perpetrators.

In some ways, I'm a pacifist, because I believe that God can settle all wars.

Ted Rudow III, MA  
Encina Ave  
Palo Alto, CA

# We must respect one another

It has been brought to light by the electronic media that the Bangladeshis are not only made to consume formalin mixed fish, fruits etc. but they are also compelled to consume food meant for four-footed animals.

In the recent past, large consignments of pet food were found contaminated in the United States. That imported consignment of dog food worth millions of dollars were taken out of the shelves and destroyed. A section of the unscrupulous people of Bangladesh has taken upon the responsibility to prove that the lives of the Bangladeshis are less valuable than the lives of the animals of the western hemisphere.

The reporter expressed concern about when all these malpractices will come to an end in Bangladesh. I think it is very unlikely to happen as the people are not self-respecting. All kinds of malpractices will only come to an end when the people will learn to respect one another. Very unfortunately, this has altogether disappeared from society.

Saleh Mohammad Ayub  
Houston, Texas, USA

# An appeal to DMP

The airport road has cuts on the sides so that buses may pull in to pick up and drop passengers. However, it has been observed that they rarely pull into these cuts to pick up and drop passengers. They usually stop right in the middle of the road without having any care for the traffic behind them. Is there any way to stop them from doing this? DMP may post a policeman at every bus stop to ensure that buses actually stop and park at the designated bus stops. They should even fine the bus drivers who violate these traffic rules.

Aminur Rahim  
New DOHS, Mohakhali  
Dhaka

# Conference on English language teaching

Very recently, the Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association (BELTA) hosted a three days long 6th international conference on "The Multiple Realities of English: ELT and Beyond" at National Academy of Educational Management. Noted national and international experts participated in the conference. It was an excellent, well-organised conference and a good opportunity for the English teachers to share their opinions with the resource persons.

It was a really effective platform to explore the challenges and problems of the communicative English learning-teaching at the secondary and higher secondary levels. However, for the first time I joined the conference and learned many things from there. I hope that I will join the next conference and urge all the English teachers to join the conference.

Badsha Solaiman  
University of Dhaka

# Stop BCL



PHOTOS: STAR

The AL-led 14-party alliance has completed four years of their tenure. Anyone who has a little sense will agree that the rowdy elements of the AL's student wing, BCL, have created troubles for the party. But it is a matter of great regret that the AL high-ups including its party chief Sheikh Hasina do not seem to be bothered at all by the BCL's terrorism. To our surprise, we have also witnessed how the home minister has encouraged BCL's unruly activities. As a result, we had Bishwajit Das and many others killed and our educational institutions almost ruined. To our horror, we have seen how our respectable teachers are beaten and insulted. What is more, the BCL cadres can easily get away with their most horrible crimes. The law enforcers don't nab the culprits who are seen moving with arms in front of them. Needless to say, this creates the culture of impunity. We are shocked by the activities of both the administration and the party in power. Awami League should not forget that the public who voted them to power will not take much time to throw them out of power in the 2014



national election. So, stop BCL.  
Md. Ripon Ahmed  
Lecturer in English  
Starlight College, Sylhet

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Bangladesh Chhatra League has become a Frankenstein in the eyes of the common people. The BCL cadres are involved in violence and turf war among them. They are doing this to establish their supremacy in every educational institution of the country. A few days ago, a 10-year-old boy was killed in a gunfight between BCL's two factions at Bangladesh Agricultural University. During the blockade of BNP-led 18 party alliances, BCL cadres mercilessly murdered a 24-year-old tailor, Bishwajit Das. The murder of Bishwajit by the BCL cadres shocked every conscious citizen. They even threw acid at teachers at Begum Rokeya University. The heinous acts of BCL are going to ruin the academic life of general students. Who will stop them?  
Md. Yamin Khan  
Government Rajendra College, Faridpur

# READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Tuesday's The Daily Star news report headlined "Jamaat, Shibir strike terror"

## Selim Reza

Those who committed heinous activities across the country do not have morality. The Jamaat-Shibir cadres must be brought to justice.

## Roni Rahman

We reap what we sow. The Shibir activists did not do anything different than the BCL. If the government encourages political crimes and vandalism by BCL, on what logic they blame Shibir for doing the same? This incident only shows the depth of the violent political culture we have created and still nurturing. Today it is Shibir, yesterday it was BCL, and tomorrow it will be JCD. The problem is with our whole political culture.

## Barkat

Every action has an equal and opposite reaction. The Awami League government is entirely responsible for creating such atmosphere that left the oppositions with the only option of fighting on the street.

## Naabaj

Enough is enough. Please ban the politics of terror.

## Selma

These violent criminal attacks should be condemned by all parties. Also, all student wings of the political parties should be banned as they are just tools of terror and these student bodies bring disrepute to most law abiding students.

## Abol Fazal Syed Mahub Baksh

Activities of these anti-liberation forces should be sternly dealt with, and now.

## Labu Khan

This time I agree with our Finance Minister AMA Muhith who said the violence had proved intelligence failure.

## Iftekhar Hassan

I pray Bangladesh does not turn into a country like Pakistan at the end. I personally don't like religion-based political parties. However, I am willing to tolerate their practice of democratic rights.

## Zerosopher

Politics of persecution by the government and politics of vandalism by the opposition parties -- both must end. The training on civic behaviour has to start from kindergarten level. There have to be TV, newspaper advertisements on encouraging good behaviour by citizens.

## Mohammad Nurul Hoque

If Jamaat becomes the part of government in near future, Bangladesh will become a hell.

## Turja, Canada

Beware. This is a prelude to turn the country into a Taliban state.

## Mijanur Rahman

It looks like the government is sitting like a lame duck awaiting its impending fall. If its machinery cannot protect the citizens and their interests from a peripheral force like the Jamaat, it is not difficult to predict what might befall the country if any stronger elements with ulterior design try to destabilise the country. It is high time the government used its full force to contain these nefarious forces that are unleashing terror in the country with the overt intention to jeopardise the ongoing war crimes trials.

## Mahmudul Hassan

I am shocked at how the political parties are destroying our country. General people are frightened and cannot protest against such attacks. Government and all political parties are responsible for this situation.

## Md Shahjahan

On the basis of electronic and print media photos, arrest and punish those culprits who created this mayhem.

## Ahsan Kabir

The government should hold a plebiscite on if Jamaat-Shibir should be banned from politics and come to a decision through passing bill in parliament. The government should respect people's opinion in this regard. I believe more than 80% people of the country will vote for banning the party