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Politics in the country

Why does the Awami League not join in the parliament to discuss the issues of concerns with the BNP lawmakers? Why do they take the road to creating more anarchy and impeding public movement?

I don't have any inclination towards any party politics but we, the general public, need a place where we can live and die comfortably without any intimidation and threats.

Why the general public will suffer though they are innocent law abiding people of the country? Our political parties, while they are in power, forget all the good words and start plundering and making money leaving the ethical values outside their course of action.

I will blame both the Awami League and the BNP for not being able to play the critical and effective role in the parliament as well as in the general political arena. Both of them are partly responsible for creating political unrest in the country.

Politics is not meant for causing suffering to the general public and while an elected government is there, please allow them to rule the country for the period as stipulated in the constitution and the opposition should go ahead with good work to gain public support for the next term in a disciplined way.

None of the political parties can claim they will be in power

fair election and so on. Rocca met with the prime minister and other government officials, leader of the opposition party, the industries minister and H.M. Ershad.

The US is fighting against terrorism all over the world and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were the results of the belligerent US policy. They also want Bangladesh as a partner of them in this regard. What is going on in the name of fighting against terrorism? What is the real objective of the US?

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Some thoughts on politics

Politicians as well as political parties particularly in advanced democratic countries generally try to outwit the opponents in their political campaigns. But the situation in Bangladesh is totally different. Here we see political vendetta. In fact, some politicians are encouraging their party activists to become trigger-happy. The meaning of politics has become grabbing of political power through arms. Thus democracy hardly exists in Bangladesh. During the last 34 years we never witnessed any real peaceful political environment. We find the negative traits of our political leaders, politicisation of bureaucracy, free

Commission may be made compulsory.

Determination of cut off point for public support: The aims and objectives of our major political parties are almost identical. Thus existence of so many parties is hardly justified. It is generally believed that so many parties only contribute to creation of confusion and anomalies. It appears that political parties must obtain at least 15% of the votes polled in the national election for their survival.

Party council: To make the parties more democratic in their approach it appears that it would be good for the party to hold party council every two years. This will widen the scope of cultivating the democratic norms inside the party. Additionally, such practice will help bring some balance in the party leadership.

Restriction on the election of party chief: The existing practice of making the chief of the party a permanent position must be discontinued. It is certainly against good political culture. If election of the party chief is restricted strictly to two terms, it will create a scope for evaluating the honest and benevolent leaders in the party.

Audit of funds of the political party: Sources of party fund and its utilisation must be properly audited. At present due to lack of transparency in the utilisation of party fund the system of sale and purchase of leaders is thriving. If proper audit is started the influ-

considered to bring discipline in trade union activities.

Code of conduct for politicians: At present we see some politicians change their party loyalty too easily and too often. Their motive is only to grab power by any means. People's welfare or public interest do not appeal to them at all. Thus it has become necessary to fix some code of conduct for the politicians.

Restriction on formation of government: During the last twelve years we see that government is formed with parties winning less than 37% of cast votes. This may be regarded as a weakness in our government. In such situations the parties forming the government hesitate to take decisions for the greater interest of the country. We feel that the parties forming government should win not only the majority of the seats in the parliament they must also obtain at least 51% of the votes cast. This will help the party to see the problems of the country in the broader perspective.

Tenure of government: Five-year term of the government appear to be too long a period. Though it will be more expensive for the national exchequer it is worth considering reducing the term to four years. Such system is working well in US and France.

National Advisory Council: It may be a good idea to set up a non-party advisory council to work in the cabinet as we see in UK (House of Lords).

Extension of tenure of Non-party Caretaker Government: For cleaning up the anomalies and to hold free and fair election the period of 90 days is not enough. It is the general thinking of the common people that the tenure of the non-party Caretaker Government may be extended up to one year.

Revamping of Election Commission: The present saga of CEC and other election commissioners are not a pleasant one. EC should be thoroughly reorganised. Preparation of an accurate voter list is very much necessary for the election and democracy. Electronic voting system may be introduced.

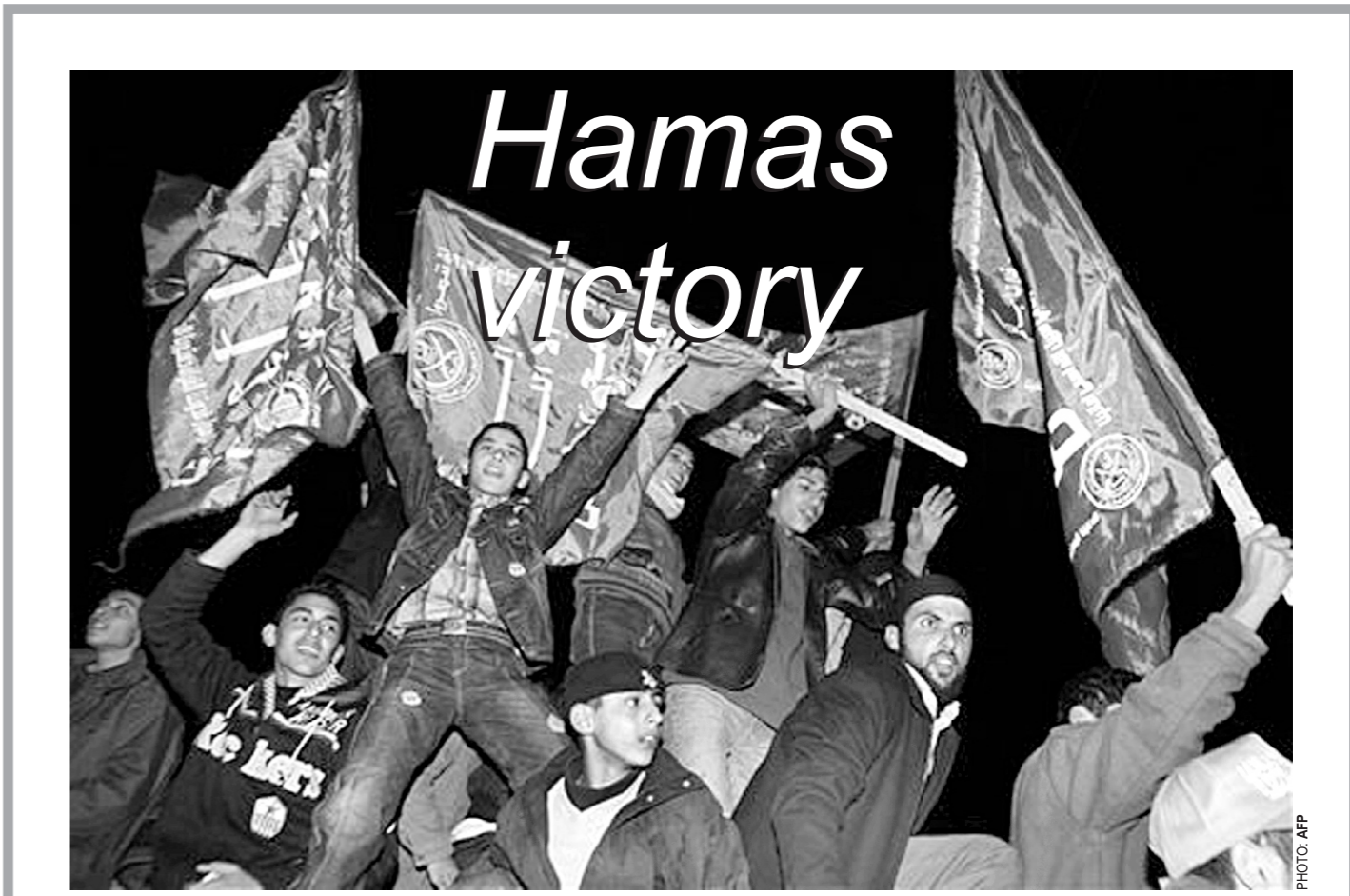
People of Bangladesh fought for independence and sacrificed a lot. It was their general expectation that they would be able to lead a better political and economic life in an independent country. Due to crises in the initial years of independence, a long period of dictatorial regimes for more than two decades and subsequent political restlessness, it has become necessary for all the conscious citizens of the country to find some solution to stabilise democracy in the country as early as possible.

MH Bari, On e-mail

Dreams

More or less every individual walks along the life-span with dreams and one of which only comes true to emerge another vacant. Dreams are dreamt at night but blur vision at daylight. Dreams are individualistic, dreams are collective, dreams dilute, dreams coagulate, and dreams tear asunder, dreams cement, dreams levitate, dreams dive in.

Dreams are agile like syntax, adrift like rafts, artistic like weaving, wayward like permuting, and on the increase like stacking. All of us want to have a nice dream at night but when dreams turn into nightmare, we are frustrated. Roney, On e-mail



Hammas' stunning victory in Palestinian polls not only shocked the long ruling strong Fatah section but it also put the United States and European Union in an uneasy situation. The victory is also shrouded by the fear that the US brokered road-map to peace process initiated by Mahmud Abbas and Ariel Sharon could face a major setback as Israeli acting prime minister Ehud Olmert has strongly ruled out any dialogue with Abbas as long as Hamas does not give up its anti-Israeli stance. The United States has already warned president Abbas of sanctions if Hamas does not renounce the path of terrorism. European Union in harmony with the United States also cautioned that it would not tolerate any situation that may endanger the integrity of Israel. The burning question at the moment is that if American diplomacy can convince and bring both Abbas and Sharon administration to the negotiation table for peace, then why can't Bush administration do the same thing with Hamas. Now that Hamas has emerged as a victorious party knowing fully well the responsibilities that they have to shoulder, isn't it too early to assert that Hamas may continue their act of violence against Israel in the course of administration of Palestine Authority? However, in this regard one thing that may serve as an eye-opener to us is that Hamas' landslide victory in the Palestinian polls was solely based on one of their many important election pledges that is to 'Root out Corruption' which plagued the Fatah authority for long.

In the perspective of our country's present scenario where rampant corruption has gripped the whole nation and made the people's life miserable, can't we have at least one party whose main election slogan would be to rid the country of corruption? However, the pledge of election should be truly based on the establishment of secular, progressive and true democratic form of government. Humayun Hyder, Zigatola, Dhaka

Hammas won the Palestinian parliamentary election with a margin not even expected by themselves-with participation of 78% voters, they won 76 seats out of 132.

In the occupied Palestine, Hammas steadily gained popularity amid despair, and became the leading force in second Intifada. Hammas believes in regaining the original Palestinian state in what is now Israel. That means a right of return for all the 4 million Palestinians to the land they were driven away from in 1948. During the Intifada, they showed unwavering resolve in facing Israeli terror. But resistance is not all that made people vote for them. They undertook educational and social programmes in the occupied area, and were known for their honesty. All these in contrast with Fatah party, who were taken for a ride by the US and Israel in the endless maze of dead ends in the so called 'roadmap' for peace and statehood, became known for corruption and incompetence, and whose infighting descended the state further into lawlessness. Hammas hasn't solely banked on their stored reputation however. They moved a forward-

Happiest nation

Bangladesh is the happiest nation in the world according to the World Happiness Survey. On the other hand, Bangladesh is the

most corrupt country according to the Corruption Perception Index of TI. I feel proud to be a citizen of the happiest nation. And think it is an arm to support us when people abroad ridicule us for corruption.

Would you feel proud? Or will feel only ashamed for corruption? And it seems to me contradictory that the most corrupt nation is the happiest nation. Which survey is wrong? I would like to say that the survey

of Transparency is wrong? Which side you fall for Bangladesh? Happiest nation or most corrupt nation? Muab, On e-mail

Stop piracy

I am a worker at a musical industry. Our country is topping the list of corrupt countries. Do we have any honesty? We see people trading in illegal goods, but we don't protest. Rather, we enjoy using pirated or duplicated illegal products at less cost.

We know some of our villages are known as Thieves' Village. Before the whole world call us as thieves, we should stand against use of pirated CDs. All the major audio merchants are now busy with pirated Hindi CD business. It must come to an end. Shamsu Mia, On e-mail



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

every time as they did all good works during their tenure. In democracy you have to respect the people's verdict and work together and closely.

Once again would like to raise the concern, please don't go for chaos using bitter, slang words.

At the same time, our politicians should value the real contributions of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Ziaur Rahman. Nasarullah Momtaz Mahal, Khulna

Rocca's visit

US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Christina Rocca recently visited our country. While the government is busy with anti militants crackdown and the ruling party and the opposition are busy with the upcoming election, she discussed different issues like curbing militancy and terror financing, proposal of information sharing programme, free and

utilisation of non-student cadres and trade unions for power politics and patronisation of loan defaulters. In such a pitiable situation it is not at all surprising that very few honest and benevolent leaders can survive in the political arena. Such a state of affairs is not only bad for democracy it is also highly detrimental to good governance. As a conscious citizen of the country, I consider that implementation of the following recommendations will help improve the awful political situation that we are passing through.

Registration of political parties with the Election Commission: Though provision for registration of political parties with the Election Commission has been made under the Representation of the People (2nd Amendment) Order, 2001, registration has not been made compulsory. It is my considered opinion that for the sake of transparency and better electoral process registration of political parties with the Election

ence of black money and muscle men of the party will definitely be reduced to a great extent.

Student and labour politics: At present mainly the non-students are dominating "Student Politics". This has tarnished the image of student community in general. The present link of non-students and political touts must be snapped to bring about a peaceful atmosphere in the universities and colleges, particularly among the student community in general. For the sake of improving the general standard of politicians in future discipline among students must return to a reasonable limit. Needless to say that we can expect better educated politicians in future if the quality of students improve. The society may tolerate the political thugs and mastans for some time but not forever. The position of our trade union activities is awful. Labour indiscipline may cause serious hindrance to our effort for economic development. Even harsh measures should be



We are overburdened with our huge population. This burden creates problem in every respect of our daily life. If we consider the issue of transportation during Eid holidays, we see that it's a total disaster. As we get holi-

day just one day before Eid, it makes a terrible situation for the people who want to go home. This year, I mean during the last Eid ul Azha, people were badly harassed as the transport problem became acute. Even many

people were in bus or launch on the Eid day. Our question is why don't the authorities look into this matter? Throughout the year we see traffic jam in the city--hundreds of buses everywhere. But during the crucial

time, there is severe shortage of transport. Every year the media focuses on this issue, but after the days are over the problem is buried. Again the Eid comes and the same situation arises. This is the

picture! What is the remedy? People have to wait for long hours to collect tickets, and then there is great uncertainty as far as reaching the destination is concerned. Buses are overloaded; accidents occur frequently,

launches capsizes. During the Eid holidays, heavy fog added a new dimension to the danger. Something has to be done about it. Shegufta Yasmin Lalmatia, Dhaka

PHOTO: AFP