

Mineral resources, Phulbari movement, and lessons from Nigeria

The success of the Phulbari movement with the participation of ordinary villagers has now offered the policy makers of the country an opportunity to rethink over the issue of how to extract the underground resources for the greater benefit of the country, and in this regard, one must learn from the experience of Nigeria or any other developing countries, that industrialization is not the only solution to underdevelopment.

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THE government's recent decision to cancel the coal mining deal with the Asia Energy Company amidst mass protests under the leadership of National Committee to Protect Oil and Gas has set off an interesting debate over the issue of FDI and the role of MNCs in the economic development of Bangladesh.

Those who are opposing the deal claim that MNC involvement in mining will not contribute to the development of the country's economy and that the state's direct role is pivotal for the development of the sector. And those, who are in favour of the deal, advocate that the investment of MNCs in mining sector is indispensable to harness the underground resources since FDI is the only lifeline for Bangladesh economy and there is no point of keeping the underground resources unused.

Also ideological orientation of the leadership of the National Committee has invited criticism from various quarters. Commentators now argue from an ethno-political standpoint that the national identity of some companies has motivated the leadership of the Committee to launch the agitation. Accordingly, they often go one step ahead to insist that Bangladesh is in the dire need of making a choice between industrial economy and subsistence agricultural economy to become a mid-income country in the world and for doing so, the country has to bear the cost of industrialization in any form.

I do not intend to go into the ideological debate between pro-market and anti-market intellectuals over whether FDI of the MNCs is the only means for harnessing the mineral resources for ensuring economic development of Bangladesh. Rather I would like to point out that the Asia Energy's Phulbari debacle has offered us an opportunity to rethink whether MNCs' investment and their operation in mining sector can ensure economic development of Bangladesh.

In this regard, a brief examination of Nigeria's experience is very relevant. This is because Nigeria's economy has exclusively been oil dependent for the past few decades and also a good number of multinational companies, namely Shell BP, Mobil, Chevron, Alf, Agip, and Texaco are currently in operation there. Shell BP has a monopolistic presence in Nigeria producing over half of the crude oil.

Nigeria's experience

Exploration of oil and gas fields of Nigeria in the 1960s by the MNCs caused a shift in the once agriculture dependent subsistent economy. As a result, the contribution of agriculture to GDP, which was 63 percent in 1960, declined to 29.3 percent in 2001 due to over-reliance on mining sector and neglect of the agricultural sector in the country.

The shift in economy also experienced Nigeria even becoming a net importer of basic food items by 1975. It was also accompanied by an uneven capital formation in the economy of the country over the years. Gross domestic investment increased to 22.8 per cent of GDP

during 1973-80 from 16.3 per cent during 1965-73, while it came down to almost 14 per cent during 1980-88. It continued to decline in the subsequent years as the figure came down to only 8.2 per cent in 1991-98.

Also the current account balances before official transfers remain negative since 1965 as the reliance on oil producing sector did not succeed in bringing any positive shift in the economy of Nigeria. What is most striking is that the country still remains as one of the poorest countries in the world as per capita GNP is very low, although 90% of the foreign exchange earning and around 80% of its revenue financing have been coming from the oil sector for the past three decades. The per capita GNP of Nigeria was only \$362 in 2001 and also for the last few years GDP growth has not been able to cross the benchmark of 3%.

The shift of economy from agriculture to industrial sector also witnessed some major environmental degradations emanating from reckless oil production causing deterioration of the economic condition of Nigeria. MNCs, engaged in oil production, are now consistently threatening the livelihood of a vast number of local communities. In this regard, one must take note of the fact that agriculture and fishing industry are the two major sources of subsistence of the rural people of Nigeria. The by-product of gas flaring, oil spillage are persistently destroying the nitrogen cycle of the soil and plants, contaminating water and contributing to the extinction of plankton, fish and other aquatic

organisms, resulting in the reduction of income and widening poverty of the rural people. Many vital food crops like cassava, pepper, garri, and cocoyam have recently experienced poor yields and also crops such as yellow yam are in the process of extinction.

Also rural farmland, which traditionally provides a safety net for a great number of rural people depending on the production of crops and various indigenous medicines, now confronts destruction. It is calculated that as many as 10,000 families from each of the six major oil communities have lost their farmlands since 1978 when the Land Use Act was enacted to smoothen the oil exploration of the MNCs. Even legal cases brought against Shell for its oil spills and gas flaring has so far been of no use. In 80 per cent of the legal trials held in 1997, Shell got away with the charges by proving that incidents of oil spills and gas flaring resulted from the act of sabotage.

Lessons for Bangladesh

From the brief examination of Nigeria's experience, one can now argue that the FDI of MNCs for extracting underground resources to boost the national ex-chequer might not be an exclusive element for economic development, if the various costs of such projects are not taken into consideration. If the costs of such industrialization projects overshadow the economic and social benefits of the people concerned, then what is the use of undertaking these projects?

Bangladesh's experience with Kaptai dam project is no different in this context. Development induced displacement of the local communities living in Kaptai dam areas demonstrated how such displacement could eventually emerge as a threat to physical security of the country causing exhaustion of national resources as the state sought military solution to the problem. In fact, the concept of sustainable development is now very much in vogue in any develop-

ment discourse.

However, in Nigeria's case, there is obviously another set of political and social factors that are contributing to the economic degradation, but one must not deny that the picture of economic development by means of underground resource extraction with MNCs' FDI might not be as rosy as many people think. It is also indeed understandable that MNCs in Nigeria have constructed roads and other transport infrastructure throughout the country for facilitating crude oil transportation, but it had little impact in terms of real value addition to the national economy of Nigeria.

One of the most striking features of mining sector is that it is not labour intensive, but a highly capital intensive sector. Therefore, this sector does not have much capacity to generate significant employment compared to agricultural sector. In Nigeria, according to a Labour Force Statistics of 1980, only 5,000 employers were engaged in the country-wide operation of Shell. Also, being the fourth-largest exporter of non-fuel minerals in Africa and the world's fifth-largest producer of uranium, mining sector of Namibia accounts for only about 3% of employment of the total population while about half of the population depends on subsistence agriculture. Like Nigeria, Namibia also usually imports about 50% of its cereal requirements and in drought years food shortages appears as a major problem in the rural areas.

Again, while drawing a flamboyant picture of FDI in terms of its contribution to development, one must not be very naive. It is not necessarily proper to claim that FDI always does good to the economy of a country. It can often be even opposite. Brazil is a good example in this regard. The increase of inflows of FDI from \$3 billion to \$17 billion in Brazil was accompanied by the increase in current account deficit from \$1.2 billion to \$33 billion

during 1994-1997. Economists put blame on capital flight for such situation.

Also, insistence on industrialization for economic development misses one important feature of world economy overlooking contribution of the agriculture sector to the economy of even a highly industrialized country. The industrialized USA continues to give huge subsidy to its agricultural sector to protect the livelihood of the farmers. The export price of the agricultural products remained 10-50 per cent below the production cost, keeping the sector competitive in the world market. In fact, the total of all agricultural support in OECD countries went from \$271.2 billion in 1986-1988 to \$330.6 billion in 1998-2000, despite the fact they have an obligation under WTO agreement to reduce agricultural subsidy. Therefore, one must not forget that the Nigerian geologists also had the same dream like many of us do have now when they discovered first oil field of the country.

The pro-market advocates, in criticizing the role of the National Committee to Protect Oil and Gas in the movement against Asia Energy Company, have in fact admonished the leadership as "romantic" people who aspire to make Bangladesh a rural paradise of "contented farmers." Also they apprehended that such movement against a multinational company would prevent the foreign investors from making any investment in future. In this regard, one must take note of one interesting aspect of political economy of Nigeria. Relentless economic crisis and political instability in Nigeria have never been able to cause any decline in the flow of foreign direct investment as oil exports remain at a constant level.

Even when instability was everyday feature of Bangladesh politics during Ershad regime, Karnafuly Fertilizer Company (KAFCO) made huge investment in the country as the deal was predominately in their

favour. Profit is the only guiding principle for the multinational companies when they make investment. Therefore, such criticism is often considered to be an economic reductionist approach merely reflecting the scholarship of much debated modernization process, which predominately claims economic development to be a linear process.

Even the failure of the World Bank's much publicized Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) for development has now given birth to the idea of controversial Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper which has even incorporated the elements of ownership and participation of the stakeholders in the development process. Therefore, this kind of economic reductionism is devoid of considering development as an integrated whole as it neglects major issues like environment, distributive benefit of economic development, etc. Nigeria's experience for Bangladesh can be a good lesson in this regard.

Also ethno-political criticism against the Phulbari movement undermines the credit of the local people. One must not forget that this is not easy for some "romantic" leaders, who are not involved in the mainstream politics, to assemble more than 25,000 people. These people were indeed "discontented farmers" who launched the agitation only for the sake of their existence.

This can be a good lesson for our politicians who have lost their credibility to the general masses and, thereby, have to allure their activists with money to take part in the political demonstrations and election campaigns. In this regard, one can raise the question: if either of the mainstream political parties was involved in the Phulbari movement, could it be possible for anyone to make the same criticism that the identity factor of the MNCs was pivotal in launching the movement by some left-leaning leadership against the Asian Energy Company

or Tata while they keep mum over the investment of the companies from China, Pakistan, and the Middle East?

In fact, newspaper reports show that many of the local political activists belonging to leading mainstream political parties also got involved in the Phulbari movement against Asia Energy Company. In criticizing the movement, one must not overlook the fact that the media projection in recent days was one of the contributing factors in making local people aware of the potential catastrophe that the Phulbari project held for the area. Therefore, it must be endorsed that the threat to the physical existence motivated the local people to even risk their lives. In this regard, state must take the responsibility of its failure to remove this fear of losing means of livelihood of the people living in Phulbari.

Indeed, not only Phulbari, uprisings of ordinary people in Demra and Kansat in recent times have set instances that, when people's existence confronts crisis, it is in fact people who make someone a leader and do not wait for a leader to come and rescue them. It is also true that the success of Phulbari movement with the participation of ordinary villagers has now offered the policy makers of the country an opportunity to rethink over the issue of how to extract the underground resources for the greater benefit of the country and in this regard, one must learn from the experience of Nigeria or any other developing countries that industrialization is not the only solution to underdevelopment.

In fact, development has a very broad and complex understanding, which demands a balanced approach in relation to the role of market and state as well as role of the agricultural and industrial sectors.

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Light at the end of the tunnel?

The way the CTG evolved, and was incorporated in the Bangladesh constitution which gave it the legitimacy to rule the country and hold an election, arose from the trust and confidence of the major political parties. If a candidate for CA is viewed as being "partisan," the legitimacy of the process becomes compromised, and, therefore, that designated person become "unsuitable" and should be considered "unavailable" for appointment as CA of the CTG.

GHULAM RAHMAN

PRIME Minister Khaleda Zia has been propagating in public meetings and armed forces darbars across the country that the Awami League is opposed to the holding of the next general election under a caretaker government (CTG). Her assertions are half-truths, to say the least. In her re-election bid she is spreading venom. The issue is not CTG. At the crux of the controversy lies one person, Justice K.M. Hasan, the first claimant to the CA's position in the next CTG, who was, but for a constitutional amendment passed by Khaleda Zia's government, ineligible for the job. The AL doubts his "neutrality," the core element of CTG.

Had there been no enhancement of the retirement age of the Supreme Court judges the country would not have witnessed the caretaker controversy at all. The problem has arisen because of the attitude of the BNP that it can get away with anything with its two-thirds majority in parliament. Usually, constitutional amendments are adopted to resolve long outstanding disquieting issues, but this particular amendment has created a problem which is causing much pain and suffering to the masses, as well as wastage of precious time, energy, and resources.

This unwarranted controversy, however, can be resolved at least in three different ways -- first, through negotiation between the government and the opposition AL; second, by Justice K.M. Hasan voluntarily stepping aside; and third, by judicial adjudication whether a controversial person can become CA in the CTG as envisioned in the constitution.

Since 1990, the rein of government changed hands thrice through elections held under non-party "neutral" caretaker governments. The CTG was made an integral part of the constitution in 1996 to create a level playing field for all participating parties in parliamentary polls, to allay the opposition's apprehension of "electoral engineering" by the ruling party, and for orderly and peaceful transfer of power from one elected regime to another.

A controversy has engulfed the

CTG since the retirement age of Supreme Court judges was increased from 65 to 67 by the present government. The government argues that the retirement age was raised to overcome the paucity of qualified judges in the higher courts, but the AL alleges that it was a clever move to make Chief Justice K.M. Hasan, who was once International Affairs Secretary of BNP and President's Zia's ambassador to Iraq, the next CTG chief advisor. The AL apprehends that a government headed by Justice Hasan would not be a "neutral" one, but a de facto extension of BNP rule. Therefore, the AL and its partners in the 14-party alliance, as well as a number of other opposition political parties, have put forward the demands for reformation of the CTG and the Election Commission as pre-conditions for their participation in the forthcoming general election scheduled to be held in January 2007.

The prime minister, in her response to the opposition's demands, had announced that she would consider their proposals if AL re-joins, and places its proposals in, the parliament. She also indicated that, once the proposals were placed there, a dialogue for consensus might take place outside. The leader of the opposition met the requirement set by the PM. A process of negotiation started with an exchange of letters between the secretaries general of BNP and AL. However, it stalled after several communications on the issue of inclusion of members from other FPA partner parties, particularly Jamaat-e-Islam, which the 14-party opposition combine (FPOC) consider to be an anti-liberation force and are, therefore, not inclined to sit with them for negotiation.

While most people admire the FPOC's pro-liberation predilections, they found their stance somewhat confusing. If elected members of the parliament from Jamaat and other parties were included in the government's team, they have every right to be part of it, and FPOC, in conformity with democratic principles and ideals, should not object to parleys with them. If they were not MPs the FPOC could ask for their replacement, and the gov-

ernment should include only those MPs who do not have a tarnished past. On the other hand, as most parties in FPOC do not have representation in the parliament their team may be composed of non-MPs, too. Further, as the BNP and the AL are dominant partners of the opposing groups their secretaries general should lead their respective teams.

If the intransigence on either side prevents their coming to an agreement on composition of the negotiating teams, the secretaries general of the BNP and the AL may start a one to one dialogue as proposed by the business leaders, with their advisors being available for consultations if and when the negotiators required their help.

The PM, instead of giving attention to cutting the Gordian knot, is carrying out the party's usual strategy of creating an imaginary issue and then launching a hate propaganda. She has started a campaign to win support of the people, and of armed forces, for holding of the forthcoming parliamentary polls whether the AL and other opposition parties participate or not. Of course, shrewd politician that she is, she has kept options open for a negotiated settlement by emphasizing her commitment and resolve to adhere to the constitutional process.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Hasina, the opposition leader, has moved at least half-way to reach a compromise. At a briefing with the members of Overseas Correspondents Association Bangladesh (OCAAB) on September 5, she brushed aside suggestions of a political crisis in the country and also asserted that: "There is no need for mediation or third-party intervention. The people of this country are enough to resolve the problems on their own." Citing Article 58 of the constitution, she opined that there are various options within the constitution to find a non-party, neutral CA to head the next CTG. It seems that both Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina are now on parallel tracks, but the question of appointment of Justice K.M. Hasan as next CA is preventing their tracks from

merging.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and former PM Sheikh Hasina are sagacious leaders. They worked together in the 1980s to rescue the nation from the darkness of autocratic rule, and paved the way for the blossoming of democracy and freedom. I firmly believe they will rise above their personal and party interests for the greater national interest, for maintaining peace and harmony, and for holding a free and fair election this time, too, by resolving this controversy soon.

In case the politicians fail to resolve the caretaker controversy, the nation can be saved from the impending peril by Justice K.M. Hasan, who is reportedly a man of high integrity as well as a conscious person. When political parties, which commanded support of almost half of the population in the 2001 general election, are opposed to his assumption of the post of CA it will be difficult for him to govern the country, and hold an election, without resorting to repressive measures. He would need full backing of the armed forces and the civil bureaucracy, which may not be readily forthcoming in his case as he is not an elected leader. If he steps aside, and makes himself "unavailable" for the post of CA, the country will be spared a calamity. This gesture of his would bestow on him more glory and public esteem than his becoming CA for three months and pushing the country in the harms way.

While incorporating the CTG provision in the constitution the then BNP lawmakers had foreseen scenarios where doubts may arise about the "neutrality" of Supreme Court judges, and provided clauses in the constitution to weed them out. They even thought of an extreme situation when the president would not be able to zero in on a consensus candidate to hold the office of CA. The Article 5C (3&4) dealt with the question of judges as CA. The stipulations are that the last retired chief justice would become CA of the forthcoming CTG, and in case the immediate past chief justice "is not available or is not willing to hold the office of Chief Advisor" his immediate predecessor will be offered the job. In the event of non-availability of either of them for appointment as CA "the President shall appoint as Chief Advisor the person who, among the retired Judges of the Appellate Division, retired last."

If the politicians fail to resolve the controversy, and Justice K.M. Hasan considers it inappropriate to step aside, the president, as

the ultimate guardian of the nation, will be required to evaluate very carefully the legal interpretation of the words "available" and "willing" before inviting him to become CA. Article 58C (2) of the constitution allows the president 15 days time for doing so.

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, the meaning of the word "willing" is eagerly compliant, disposed to accept; but the meaning of the word "available" may have legal tangles and, hence, is somewhat more complex. The Random House Webster's College Dictionary defines the word "available" as "suitable or ready for use; at hand;" etc. However, the American Heritage Dictionary elaborates the meaning of "available" as: having the qualities and the willingness to take on a responsibility.

The way the CTG evolved, and was incorporated in the Bangladesh constitution which gave it the legitimacy to rule the country and hold an election, arose from the trust and confidence of the major political parties. If a candidate for CA is viewed as being "partisan," the legitimacy of the process becomes compromised, and, therefore, that designated person become "unsuitable" and should be considered "unavailable" for appointment as CA of the CTG. I am of the view that the controversy and the doubts about his "neutrality" have made Justice K.M. Hasan ineligible for holding the post of CA in the forthcoming CTG.

My view is that of a layman. I call upon the experts on jurisprudence to deliberate and give their expert opinion. In any case, it would be prudent for the president to seek guidance of the Supreme Court before deciding to invite Justice K.M. Hasan to become CA of the next CTG if the controversy involving him does not end by the time the present parliament completes its tenure next October.

I foresee light at the end of the tunnel. On the day of reckoning, there would be no crisis but all smiles. All the hate campaigns would appear purposeless, all the sound and fury meaningless and the nation would march, with head held high, towards holding of a free, fair, and credible election, under a universally acclaimed neutral CTG and EC. Let democracy bloom in Bangladesh forever, and let the dream of a just and egalitarian society with every citizen well clothed, well educated and having a decent living come true in our life time.

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How popular is he really?

Many Iranians believe they deserve better. To be sure, they are tired after years of revolution, terrorism and war. Most seem to have made a silent pact: as long as the government doesn't involve itself in their personal affairs and provides life's basic necessities, they will remain apolitical.

MAZIAR BAHARI

YOU haven't lived 'til you've driven a BMW 740," exclaims Reza, Tehran's self-proclaimed No 1 Ladies' Man. He accelerates past posters of Iranian, Palestinian and Lebanese martyrs as other drivers eye his slicked-back hair and designer shades with mixed envy and disdain. Bopping to Kamran and Hooman, an Iranian pop duo from Los Angeles, he flips open his mobile. "The stallion's thirsty for you," he croons to one of his (many) girlfriends. Reza is not only rich but also corny and, seemingly, morals-free. "I've paid so many fines for speeding that the government should give me a medal!" Arrested repeatedly for such infractions, or worse, he says he bribes his way out of trouble.

To many Iranians, Reza and his ilk symbolize all that is wrong with their country and its direction. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad calls them "people with money and no pain" -- not to mention "corruptors of the earth." The fact that he himself is clearly not of their class is key to his popularity. But beyond the rhetoric, is he doing much to right the balance? Reza and other rich Iranians dismiss the president as all talk. More surprising is the fact that in recent months, so do a growing number of the poor Iranians who are the backbone of his support.

Ahmadinejad can ill afford any erosion of his standing. As the United Nations deadline for Iran to halt its uranium-enrichment program passed, the president was defiant. "Iran is not going to give up even an iota of its inalienable right to nuclear energy," he declared in the main stadium of the southern city of Orumiya, on one of the many trips to the provinces that have cemented his image as a man of the people. But support for such an uncompromising stance could be tenuous. Ahmadinejad took office a year ago promising to improve the lives of ordinary citizens by distributing the country's oil wealth more fairly -- in his own words, "by bringing the oil money to people's tables." So far, he has failed to deliver. Having coffers fat enough to withstand Western sanctions, however symbolic, won't be enough if the hopes of millions of Iranians for a fair deal are dashed.

That, according to analysts, is precisely what's happening. Tehran is awash in money -- an extra \$25 billion last year alone. But ordinary Iranians are seeing little of it. Per capita incomes have failed to keep pace with rising living costs; rents are skyrocketing beyond people's means to pay. In many interviews

with Newsweek during recent weeks, Iranians of all political hues and classes have described Ahmadinejad's economic plans as well intentioned but unsophisticated and unlikely to yield their promised benefits. Longer term, many fear they may end in outright disaster.

Exhibit A, in their view, is the president's impractical Compassion Fund, intended originally to give interest-free loans to newly married couples, create jobs and underwrite security deposits so that poor Iranians could afford down payments on apartments. When proposed to Parliament last year, lawmakers concluded the scheme was so naively idealistic and financially ill considered that they killed it. Ahmadinejad promptly exercised executive privilege to establish a limited version of the plan, and so far 21,000 couples have registered for wedding loans. But how many have actually received money? No one knows.

Similar problems beset another grand design, Shares for Justice. The idea here, decreed by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, is to privatize state-owned industries and distribute shares to the people as a sort of national mutual fund. Trouble is, the government has changed positions so many times that no one knows any longer how the companies will be sold off, how shares will be valued or who will be eligible to receive them. Ahmadinejad says repeatedly that the program will "close the gap between rich and poor and help the oppressed." But he's been mum on the technicalities, prompting some Iranians to wonder just who's likely to benefit most from the deal.

In this, recent developments have not been reassuring. Shortly after Ahmadinejad came to power, the government undertook to reform Iran's labor laws. It raised the minimum wage by 60 percent from \$120 a month to \$180, covering eight out of 10 employees. Within a few months, however, many small factories found they could no longer afford their workers and began shutting down. Among those laid off was Amir V, a factory worker and one of an estimated 320,000 Iranians who, according to Minister of Labor Mohammad Jahromi, have lost their jobs over the past four months. "At first," says Amir, "they fired 300 workers in our factory. Then the bosses closed the factory altogether, so the rest lost their jobs as well." When the government subsequently backedtracked and reduced the state-mandated wages by a third, Iran's powerful unions protested, pointing

to surging inflation and demanding a minimum wage that reflected the rise in living costs -- the equivalent of \$240 a month. Now the government and the unions are deadlocked. One labor leader was recently dragged from his house and imprisoned for staging a peaceful strike.

Meanwhile, those who have benefited most from Ahmadinejad's rule seem to be those who ultimately secure his hold on power -- the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Senior officers have been appointed to top government posts. More importantly, they have been rewarded economically. Two years ago, when the previous government was about to award management of the new Imam Khomeini Airport to a Turkish company, Guards who wanted to run it themselves shot at the first airplane that was about to land. Needless to say, the Turkish contract was annulled. More recently a lucrative gas-exploration and transportation contract worth more than \$2 billion was awarded to the Guards. The contract went ahead without being opened to public bidding, in direct violation of the law. More and more, Iranians fear Ahmadinejad's political cronies will reap the riches of his rule, not the men in the street who elected him.

Many Iranians believe they deserve better. To be sure, they are tired after years of revolution, terrorism and war. Most seem to have made a silent pact: as long as the government doesn't involve itself in their personal affairs and provides life's basic necessities, they will remain apolitical. Economists suggest that as long oil remains above \$40, this uneasy status quo can endure. But unless Ahmadinejad can find a more efficient way of distributing that wealth, discontent is likely to brew even among the apolitical.

Slick Reza in his BMW is, naturally, sanguine. "This is a government of bazaaris, my friend. We haggle and bargain but eventually find a compromise," he says. "Look," he adds, streaking past a photo of yet another martyr along the highway. "My dad served with him in the Iran-Iraq war. I'm sure if he were alive today he would've loved to drive this car." But as for Amir, he's now a street peddler selling bootleg CDs, trying to make ends meet. "I voted for Ahmadinejad because I thought he would be different," he says, ruefully looking back on his hopes for change. "A big mistake."

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