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# Democracy in doldrums

Democracy and highhandedness can't go together. We saw police excesses in the past that were rather shocking. And the recent police brutalities unleashed on opposition activists make us, the common people, appalled at how the demand for reform to the caretaker government and the Election Commission isn't considered but confronted.

Since the very beginning, the CEC is totally insensitive to any complaints from outside. His obstinacy was evident in his unilateral preparing of a fresh voter list. The Supreme Court verdict which

declared the voter list illegal did not have any impact on the CEC. Now, not surprisingly, anomalies are being found in the corrected voter list. Free and fair election will not be possible under this CEC with such stubbornness.

Former dictator Ershad is again in the limelight as he is coming out acquitted in many cases, smiling and waving at people. People cannot forget how he dealt with the movement for democracy which resulted in the deaths of Dr. Milton, Nur Hussein and many others. Now he is dreaming of becoming president once again. We don't understand how he has

become acceptable to the forces calling themselves democratic. This is where those who cried out for democracy in the eighties certainly feel betrayed and sniff an illicit deal.

If an amendment can be brought to the constitution then why rigidity of existing electoral and caretaker system is considered so sacred that a change can't be brought about?

The government seems unconcerned. It has no headache about popular demands.

**Roney**  
*One-mail*

## A suggestion

If we, the people, want an intelligent solution, we think the people have a right to demand from their elected opposition leaders to propose and provide such a solution to the present political crisis.

The rest of the world is well aware that the country cannot manage its own affairs and we do not have to prove to the world that our leaders are incompetent. If leaders feel responsible to the people of the country and prove that still some competency is left in them to govern; then they (the leaders) should consider the

following solution: Let the competing and aspiring leaders challenge each other in a television debate to be completed in three rounds & completed within 30 days. At the end an independent vote will be taken from the people to select the right path for the country. Let the people decide which the leaders are finding difficult to work out.

These leaders must stop all destructive activities immediately which are pushing the country backwards, as it cannot go any further backwards. The people have the right to discard these leaders if they do not listen to our demands.

## Sultana Jolly, Sydney, Australia Irresponsible politics

Once I wanted to be an honest politician because they used to think about the people, especially those who are deprived and cannot fulfill their basic needs. But now who are thinking about those people? I am 26 years old and was a voter in 2001 election but I did not cast my vote for any party as the candidates were not honest and there was violence in my constituency. Those who hold the elections have to be neutral. Unfortunately, both the major parties want to have a caretaker government of their choice.

For achieving this goal, they are ready to do anything and everything. By the grace of Allah, so far all the caretaker governments acted neutrally. But this time the BNP has chosen one of its own men as the chief of the caretaker government. Because of the irresponsibility and greed for power of the politicians, we people suffer a lot. The poor are becoming poorer and corrupt people are becoming richer day by day.

We want the elections to be free and fair.  
**Parvin Akter**  
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# Terrorist attacks in India

The terrorist attack in Malegaon on the sacred day of Shab-e-Bara't was as horrible as that on trains in Mumbai on 11 July. It is not important how many were killed in Mumbai train blasts and how many in Malegaon blasts, what is important is recklessness with which innocent citizens are targeted in such brutal attacks. In Mumbai those killed were returning from their day's work and those killed in Malegaon had gathered for prayer on the sacred day of their religion. Some were there begging on the occasion.

As of now, there is no clue as to who planted bombs on trains in Mumbai and on cycles near Bada Qabrastan and mosque in Malegaon. As far as the blasts in Mumbai are concerned the police is working on the theory that Lashkar-e-Taiyiba aided and abetted by ISI of Pakistan was responsible and this assumption seems justified, though there are no solid proofs yet available.

However, as far as Malegaon blasts are concerned, the police seems to be tight-lipped. But this does not appear to be justified. The

only reason for this assumption is that probably RDX along with nitrite were used and the triggering device also seems to be similar to the one often used by Pakistan-based organisations.

Still laboratory reports have not been used and presence of RDX has not been confirmed. But even if use of RDX is confirmed it cannot be assumed that it is a Pakistan-based terrorist organisation, which is likely to be involved. Selection of the day of Shab-e-Bara't and places like Qabrastan and Mosque on Friday when people were coming out of the mosque after Friday prayers indicated that no Muslim organisation could be involved.

As it would be unthinkable that Hindutva organisations were involved in the Mumbai train blasts, it would be equally unthinkable that some Muslim organisation was involved in the Malegaon blasts. Unfortunately, the police is equivocating on this question and is still thinking on the lines that some Pakistan-based organisation is involved. In the case of Mumbai blasts it immediately came to the



conclusion that it was some Pakistan-based organisation, and began to detain or arrest various suspects.

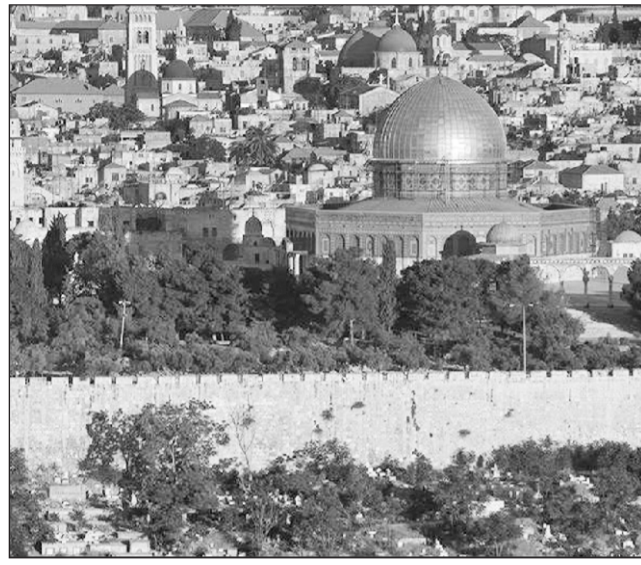
The police, however, is yet to start its investigation on the assumption that some Hindutva organisations are likely to be involved in Malegaon blasts. It is wrong to assume that the only source of RDX is ISI of Pakistan. There are people in India who also can make this deadly explosive available and it is not difficult to get the know-how for making timer devices. The people of Malegaon, like the people of Mumbai need to be complimented for their patience in maintaining communal harmony after the blasts. As in Mumbai hundreds of Muslims rushed to

help their Hindu sisters and brothers, in case of Malegaon the Hindus rushed to help their Muslim sisters and brothers. Unlike Mumbai, Malegaon is an extremely sensitive town with 75 per cent Muslim population. Yet, Hindus and Muslims showed tremendous courage and patience in remaining calm and maintaining communal harmony.

Post-Gujarat, people of India have shown much more maturity than before and now having lost mass following communal and fundamentalist forces are terrorising people through bomb blasts which handful of people can manage to do. Peace was never so urgent as today. Such killings to avenge killings by the other group will continue to take lives of thousands of innocent people. We must show wisdom to put an end to such senseless killings sooner than later.

All political parties in India must resolve to put an end to communal violence.  
**Asghar Ali Engineer**  
*Mumbai, India*

# Jerusalem and the Holy Qur'an



I came across Dr. Daniel Pipes' webpage when I was surfing the Internet. Dr. Pipes claims that Jerusalem means more to Jews than Muslims and the word Jerusalem is not written in the Holy Qur'an. Dr. Daniel Pipes is correct, however he has ignored that Jerusalem has been referred to as a city or town in the Holy Qur'an. The Holy Qur'an refers to the banishment of Jew (Children of Israel) inhabitants from a town twice. On the first occasion, it was the Army of Babylon led by Nebuchadnezzar and on the second occasion it was the Army of Rome led by General Titus. The Holy Qur'an also refers to the return of Jews to the same town with the emergence of Gog and Magog. So I would like to ask Dr. Pipes and his fellow associates, from which town the Children of Israel were banished twice and in which town did they return after 2,000 years of expulsion? The answer is very simple, Jerusalem. So, it is clear that the town the Holy Qur'an refers to is Jerusalem.

Dr. Daniel Pipes claims that Jerusalem belongs to Jews, but he has ignored the Divine conditions to inherit Jerusalem. The Children of Israel did not accept those conditions, thus Jerusalem was given to Muslims through Caliph Umar.

**Raqib Ahmed Asif, North South University**

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