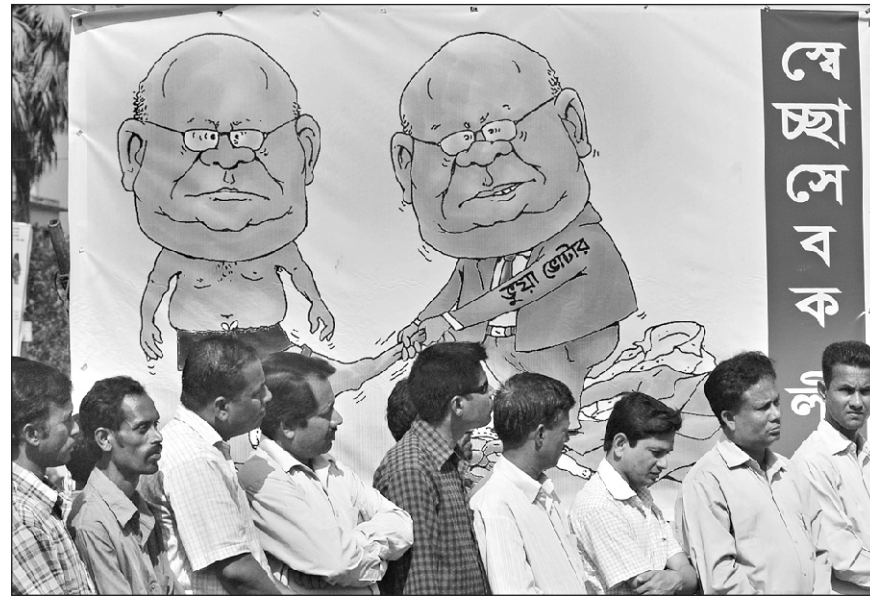


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PHOTOS: AFP

State of politics

In all civil society "hypocrisy" is hated seriously. Persons involved in "hypocrisy" are classified as fraud. Fraudulent activities are subject to punishment as per law of the land and general people are punished through legal process if convicted for "hypocrisy". Unfortunately, most of our politicians are clearly involved in "hypocrisy" and conscious-keepers hate them as well but they are not generally punished. Rather, barefacedly, they keep on saying that they are dedicated for the welfare of the people and country. Probably most of our politicians believe that as most of our people are not educated, it is safe to go after "Democracy without education, Hypocrisy without limitation".

Achieving welfare of the people and country is a continuous process for which a long-term strategic plan needs to be developed through a participatory process involving the major political parties and concerned stakeholders. The

degree of welfare of the people and country will increase along with successful implementation of the strategic plan. We should remember that "coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress and working together is success."

Are we on the right track for achieving success?

Does our existing political process contribute to creating a congenial environment for a united approach at least on major national issues?

Our politicians, policy makers frequently talk about institutionalization of democracy in their own way as they find it comfortable. It seems that they are less bothered about sustainable institutionalization of democracy. In order to establish sustainable institutionalization of democracy they must look for what lessons are learnt from the past and how the major obstacles are addressed in other parts of the world and what are the ways and means to mobilize

our resources effectively and efficiently. It is very significant to mention here that if the political parties do not practice democracy, good governance with transparency within the party, how can they contribute to the nation?

The question has come up "A fair election for what?" Let me quote from Mr. Azad's letter "As far as election is concerned there are two possibilities: either the election will be fair or it will be rigged. What will happen if the election is rigged? As we have seen before, soon after the results are announced, the defeated party will boycott the results and launch massive agitation programmes, killing people, vandalizing public properties and causing damage worth billions of dollars. The winning party will proudly accept the result and claim that the "people" have given them a clear mandate to rule (or misrule) the country for five long and luxurious years."

What will happen if the

election is fair (verified by internationally respected organisations and even by the UN Secretary General himself)? The reaction to a fair election, unfortunately, will be "exactly" the same as the reaction to a rigged election. So, are we not moving around the same vicious circle since liberation?

The major political parties are nakedly involved in activities contrary to the welfare of the people and country on the plea of "people's demand". Unfortunately, our focused civil society, having knowledge and ability, is also not specifying what are the indicators to make sure that a particular demand is the demand of the majority people and how it is measured? Where is the courage to play such a pivotal role without fear or favour for the greater interest of the nation?

Shams Chowdhury
North Circular Road,
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

This refers to a letter written

by Maswood Alam Khan "If I were Justice Abdul Aziz."

Thanks to Mr. Maswood for his intellectual concept that somehow shows the limits of citizenship of our country. With least effort we can obtain a "citizenship certificate" from a government office, but we cannot urge defending the truth, defending the right to open our shops etc.

Are we about to accept the truth that we as people do not run this country, only a small section of politicians are ready to order while we silently must go along with them? Just around this week a small taxi was burnt a few yards off my home. The fault was the driver's decision to make way through the protestors who themselves declared them as peacekeepers!

Can we say something?

Tahsin Hyder
Kalabagan, Dhaka

GrameenPhone logo
GrameenPhone, the telecommunication giant of Bangladesh, has recently changed its logo. Everywhere in the world there are examples of such changes even in the most successful businesses.

I am a student and a proud subscriber of GrameenPhone, the family which bears the feelings of more than 10 million people. We use to say it is our GrameenPhone family, we use it as our phone, and even in the time of extreme network congestion we defend it as the tireless activity to provide us better service. These feelings grew not in a single day, not in a moment. But now we are sorry to say that we have lost our Green and Red flair in sharing our feelings with it. Green & Red flair was the key to touch the heart of the people of our country and it's more than 10 million!!

It says that GrameenPhone is going to contribute 1% of our GDP this fiscal year. This is the overall contribution of the 10 million, of the hearts who really love the Green & Red flair.

Now the stylish GrameenPhone logo says nothing to us. Please go back to the previous logo through which we use to share our feelings.

Tareq Islam Shuvo
Khulna University, Khulna

A good article
The article on EC, Voter List and Electoral Reform was a superb one.

I am not an expert but having read the article I clearly understand what public confidence on the EC means. I am also convinced why the Commissioner who messed up the voter list and squandered public money in such a big way should resign. Mr. Ghani rightly pointed out that our present EC lacks public confidence and explained the reasons why. Before reading this piece I thought the demand for resignation of the Commissioner is just a political demand! Not so really.

Mr. Ghani's suggestions on the voter list - how to get the best out of a bad list - appear practical and feasible. I think it is one way that the next elections can be held under this highly inaccurate list.

In the section on electoral reform, Mr. Ghani makes an important point by stating that our political parties do not seriously want electoral reform but just want to win elections by any means - how true! His recommendations are very pertinent and deserve serious consideration by the decision makers.

Thank you once again for printing the excellent technical piece.

Tuhin
Orleans, Ottawa, ON Canada

President's role

Although some people are criticising the president for taking over the charge of Chief Adviser of the caretaker government, I think that Mr. Lajuddin has shown some courage in taking this decision in an unprecedented chaotic situation. As a general citizen, I would like to request the President & Chief Adviser to please

1. Take independent decisions after consultation with the other advisers of the interim government only, without giving much attention to the political parties' dictates, mainly BNP & AL because these parties only think about grabbing power and do not care about the interest of the people and the nation.
2. Ask the Anti Corruption Commission to take stern actions against the corrupt people (whoever they may be) of the both big political parties as these politicians will not take any effective actions against corruption because they resort to the same practice when in power. So the interim government should do something on this very important issue for the benefit of the people. The ACC has virtually done nothing so far.



Engr. Md. Aminul Hoque
Khalishpur, Khulna

Americans and their policies
It might have taken other empires centuries to achieve what the current world empire has achieved in decades. Since the old empires expanded their territory via force, brutality, and corruption, their collapse was inevitable. Some supporters of the old world and the enemies of the current one might wish for the collapse of the American empire. However, self-repair ability of this new empire prevents the wishes of its enemies from coming true. The outcome of 2006 mid-term election in the United States is not surprising and is consistent with the assumption of the empire's self-repair ability.

This assumption is based on the observation of the choices that the majority of American voters make. They tend to support the agenda of one of the two main political parties; then they push the agenda to its extreme, hold it there for a while, and pull it back to mainstream conservatism of one of the two parties. Such a cultural and political

attitude might be the reason for the success and stability of the current world empire.

Despite its unique self repair ability, this empire has not been immune from internal and external wounds, regardless of which party has had its main political power. Instead of letting it die, the people have helped the empire to recover by voting for change! Many commentators have attributed the desire for change this time to major wounds such as the war, corruption of corporate lobbyists, sexual misconduct of some representatives, and financial insecurity of low and middle class Americans. The most likely etiology of all of these wounds is the violation of universal ethical values.

While the two mainstream parties will be working together to repair the wounds at a national level, I hope they will not leave the wound of the recent international surgeries untreated.

Kamal
Artin

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