

Good Luck to You, CEC

The Chief Election Commissioner on Tuesday sought the co-operation of the candidates as well as voters to make the city corporation elections of January 30 a success.

We very happily note that there has been a noticeable change in all that and things have indeed started responding to the CEC's persistence.

How can the nation afford not to take CEC's proddings seriously? These are no national polls and in fact hardly anything higher than local council elections.

These local elections are supremely important nationally for another — and non-partisan — reason. These elections are going to influence the course of this nation's trust with democracy.

And that way it is going to be a win or lose game for the nation as a whole represented not by the Prime Minister in this case but by the Chief Election Commissioner.

The Night's Message

Setting apart a whole night for prayer to the Almighty is a wonderful mental experience that we the Muslims have demonstrated.

Lilat-ul-Barat, as its name suggests, is good luck the night brings in for all. But for the luck to be bestowed upon someone, the Almighty wants that he or she has proved worthy of the same.

The teachings of the night are quite relevant to the nation in general — one that is still striving to bring about a balance between the personal gains and the collective interests.

However, to translate the ideal of Shab-e-Barat into practice, the night's good work has to be extended into a concerted endeavour for collective good round the year.

This is at the root of every nation's success. As a nation we have proved that like all other great nations, we are capable of responding to the duty's call.

ALEXANDER Vladimir Zhirinovsky was born in Alma Ata (meaning Father Apple), capital of Kazakhstan in 1946.

After indifferent studies in Alma Ata, he found his way to Moscow and joined the Institute of Oriental Studies. He studied Turkish and this may be considered a turning point in his life.

Although the latest parliamentary elections in Russia are sending shock waves throughout the world, this is not the first time that Zhirinovsky fought elections.

HE term 'Third World' may have been useful in the past of differentiating the world's poor nations from the rich.

Along with other aid experts, he says this categorisation of countries at disparate levels of development — under one Third World grouping — leads to the current situation where middle-income countries receive more aid per capita than the poorest nations.

In 1990-1991, for instance, Israel receive 10 times more aid than a country like Madagascar.

Development experts charge that aid currently bears little or no relation to need and than an accurate index that exposes where poverty and suffering are harshest must be found — preferably soon.

To substitute 'developing world' for 'Third World' does not solve the problem, says Harrison.

"It is long, boring and value-laden," he says. "Developed countries are developing too — toward God knows what future, but at all events, different from now."

The World of Vladimir Zhirinovsky

by Arshad-uz Zaman

The world of Vladimir Zhirinovsky extends not only to the borders of the Soviet Union but goes all the way down to the warm waters of Indian Ocean.

This time his Liberal Democratic Party comes on top of the table with 25% of the votes.

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'splitting up of the Islamic world since other religions do not promote war.' Zhirinovsky is entirely in favour of Russia moving south for 'this would bring freedom to the 20 million Kurds, thousands of Baluchi, Pashtuns, Dari and others.

Zhirinovsky is holding centre stage in Turkey due to his views and also because of his fluent Turkish.

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Germany cancelled. Zhirinovsky has threatened to close 300,000 Russian soldiers back to East Germany.

If at first sight the views of Zhirinovsky appear extreme, a closer examination would reveal that they are not so far removed from the traditional Russian foreign policy.

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Ankara put out a statement that Zhirinovsky was a nationalist.

Russia and Turkey have fought many wars in the past. The collapse of the Soviet Union resulted after many centuries of Turkey not sharing border with Russia.

Zhirinovsky, the Russian armed forces factor deserves special attention. The mighty military establishment was thoroughly humiliated thanks to the inept coup which failed to topple Gorbachev.

The fall from superpower status has been a traumatic experience for the Russians. Russians are unable to see the fruits of market economy and signs of frustration are visible all around.

Third World: Poverty by Any Other Name

serves as a device to conceal how much aid is going to those who don't need it.

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Aid experts say the term 'Third World' is no longer helpful in determining which country needs the most assistance.



pressed by OXFAM's Belinda Cootie, who says the term 'is a misnomer because much of the so-called developing world hasn't done' any developing

considered an inaccurate term to describe poor countries. There are many poor nations in the northern hemisphere.

As James Wimpenny of the Overseas Development Institute notes: 'Chile, Argentina, Australia and New Zealand are all in the southern hemisphere but they are not exactly poor countries.'

Wimpenny believe that more precision in terminology is needed if aid and other development assistance is to be targeted at the poorest and the most needy countries that are more deserving.

Experts also say that one very pertinent fact that the generic Third World glosses over is that the members of the group of countries it loosely refers to require different kinds of assistance.

The middle-income and industrialised economies will benefit most from trade concessions, loans and technological cooperation, say the experts.

But those countries in the most needy group where poverty and population explosion have wreaked havoc on the environment should get all the available aid resources to assist in human resource development

and environmental conservation, they add.

The rising popularity — outside of IMF/World Bank circles — of the UN Development Programme's Human Development Index (HDI) reflects the fact that, even though it has its own drawbacks, it is, presently the most accurate measure of levels of human needs and development in different countries.

Comparing degrees of development in more than mere money terms, the HDI takes into account three indices: levels of health, education and purchasing power.

As a measure of the relative accuracy of the HDI, Sri Lanka and Costa Rica are ranked higher than they are in the World Bank's GDP per capita league table — levels of education and health in these countries are higher than their GDPs suggest.

Although the HDI has been criticised as being too crude and simplistic, many experts including ODI's Wimpenny believe it is the best index of development available.

Critical MPs Try to Out-gun the Game-keeper

Robert Otani writes from Nairobi

Kenya's already troubled relationship with Western aid donors has not been helped by a row over the country's 'Mr Wildlife,' the legless paleontologist widely credited with restoring order and profitability to the game parks.



Richard Leakey 'Mr Wildlife'

Richard Leakey, the legless paleontologist widely credited with restoring order and profitability to the game parks.

satisfied by the performance of the distinguished paleontologist, both of whose legs were amputated after an air crash.

The opposition has been led by Local Government Minister William Ole Ntimama, who accuses Leakey of running the state corporation as his own bistro and defying the President's directive that part of the proceeds from the parks, and reserves be ploughed into the coffers of the local authorities which harbour or border them.

Ntimama and a few other politicians also accuse Leakey of spending large sums of money from foreign donors without proper consultation with the Wildlife Society's board of trustees.

Ntimama followed up his opening salvo against Leakey with other attacks in news conferences and rallies.

Most of his support comes from MPs with constituencies next to the parks. Ntimama's power base is next to the famous Masai-Mara game reserve, and that of his fellow Cabinet Minister, Darius Mbela, borders the Tsavo park.

Leakey's political supporters, many of whom are Opposition MPs, say his problems are the result of a ploy by the government to replace him with someone more amenable to the powers-that-be.

has also blocked plans by politicians seeking to establish tourist resorts in the game sanctuaries.

One of the major bones of contention is the long-drawn-out wrangle between the Wildlife Society and Narok County Council over management of the Masai-Mara, which earns millions of shillings a year.

Another sore point is that the Society has been despicably skimping in compensating families whose members have been killed or maimed by stray animals or who have had crops destroyed.

Among them are the Masai, the group represented by Ntimama.

Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife official: 'Dr Leakey's only sin is that he has slammed the strong-groom door shut on the corrupt government officials who would have loved to dip their dirty fingers in the KWS funds.

The Society's chairman, journalist Hillary Ng'weno, says compensation is the responsibility of the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife not of the Society. Most Kenyans, however, do not draw a line between the two, as their roles are complementary.

A complicating factor has been the Government's silence on the issue, which has been so loud that ordinary Kenyans have taken it as acquiescence in the anti-Leakey campaign.

And when Moi finally spoke in mid-January, after weeks of controversy, the general reaction was that his intervention was the application of a bandage to an ulcer rather than treatment.

ROBERT OTANI is a freelance Kenyan journalist.

Voters' list

Sir, A correct voters' list is a must for any fair election, for if qualified voters are left out of the list, or if the voters' list contains spurious names, it largely affects the result.

tion, the pre-requisites are many and of that the voters' list is certainly of great significance. To illustrate the point, I am inclined to mention that during the 1954 general election, the total number of votes polled were only 40 per cent of the total number of voters as per voters' list.

It is true, one who is not voter now may be qualified as a voter as soon he crosses the minimum age limit required for the purpose. So also it is very much necessary that as soon as one dies his name has to be

struck off from the voters' list. But there is reason to think that the process of revision is not done as a matter of routine and is taken up only when there is talk of election and in a haste whatever revision is made, is not conclusive and correct.

To my mind, when the date of any election is announced, it is incumbent on the person or department responsible for the preparation of the voters' list to take proper and effective steps

as may be necessary to undertake revision of the last used voters' list to ensure that the dead and absent persons are excluded from it and the new persons qualified because of acquiring requisite age are included, without which the election itself will not be fair.

It is hoped that the democratic government now in office should give the matter due importance and make elections meaningful.

Doctors' strike Sir, According to newspaper reports 'doctors' called off their indefinite strike on Thursday night' following an agreement with the Government on the implementation of some of their

demands. But a local English weekly says 'BMA defers strike for 3 months.'

Whatever may be the fact, it remains that we are hostage in the hands of some trade unionists who want to have their demand accepted by any means even at the cost of human lives.

Now, hypothetically speaking, the patients and their relatives have every right to say and justify that the doctors who denied medical aid during the strike period, deserve punishment.

the help of WASA, DESA and T&T cuts off all facilities to the doctors for 10 days; the vegetable seller, the foodgrain seller, the butcher and others refuse to sell their commodities and services, — only then the doctors will realize what is the taste of a strike.

Government should take strict stand against the doctors who left the stations and joined the inhuman strike and caused sufferings to the helpless patients.

Human Right organisations must come forward and file suit for damages and criminal cases for negligence, to let the doctors feel the bite of their irresponsible trade unionism.