

The Election, Public Opinion and Democracy

by Qazi Kholiqzaman Ahmad

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Election day: vote seekers and voters

lowed by Jatiya Party at 5 per cent, Jamaat-e-Islami at 2 per cent, and other parties at 1 per cent.

In February 1991 elections, all the 13 seats of Dhaka covered in the latest BUP survey

were won by the BNP. The respondents of the present survey were also asked as how they had voted in 1991. It was indicated by 48 per cent that, at that time, they had voted for the BNP, and by 19 per cent

that they had voted for the Awami League. It is therefore clear that there has been a substantial swing in favour of the Awami League compared to 1991. This read with the national survey conducted in

April 1996 would indicate a favourable position for the Awami League. However, the voters who were either undecided or did not answer the question could make a big difference and, I suspect, they will make up their mind on the basis of how the top party leaders and the candidates come through to them as the campaign proceeds.

As an independent observer, I would like to make the following few comments. I have observed that over the past few years the Awami League president Sheikh Hasina has matured admirably as the leader of a major political party that is aspiring to lead the nation.

It is my understanding that the chairperson of the BNP, Khaleda Zia enjoyed a broad

based support during the initial years of her Prime Ministership. But she then lost touch or failed to come to grips with the overriding national policy issues either by default or because of a lack of focus on her part.

In the meantime, however, it is the 12th June that all eyes are focused on. Let sanity that returned with the establishment of the caretaker government prevail and a new administration is voted to power by the people in free and fair elections.

The future of the country is dependent on the kind of leadership that will come to power following the 12 June elections. I am sure, in free and fair elections, the people will make the right choice.

THE whole nation is looking forward to June the 12th eagerly with high hopes. Free and fair elections on the day will put the country on a more secure democratic foundation, and will generate a more secure basis for building the future.

Both the President and the Chief Adviser have repeatedly assured the nation that free and fair elections will be held on June the 12th.

Public opinion generation and its utilization in national policy making processes remain neglected in Bangladesh, and opinion polling is yet to be developed and organized here.

ing such polls. Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP) has been regularly implementing public opinion research on a wide range of subjects since the early 1995.

On the value of public opinion polling relating to elections, one may note that in the Polish presidential election last year, polls correctly predicted a close defeat of the incumbent president.

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AFTER the Second Great War, the world was divided into two camps — the Western nations, championing the cause of capitalism as the guiding principle of the world's moral and economic spirit, on one hand and Soviet Russia and the Eastern bloc nations espousing the cause of communism as the basic human doctrine that could establish equality and justice in social and economic terms among peoples of all nations, on the other.

Throughout the US and western Europe, a collective paranoia prevailed and fears of an imminent attack from the "Reds" were overemphasised. In the United States, the concept of an imaginary enemy waiting at the doorsteps of ordinary citizens and threatening the very bedrock of American life was hyped up in every possible way by the media.

The spread of communism in eastern Europe and the Far East created a growing awareness among many Americans of a possible communist danger at home.

tion for espionage of Judith Coplon, employee of the Justice Department, the revelations made in connection with the trial of Alger Hiss, formerly of the State Department, and the trial of the leaders of the American Communist Party were only the more prominent among a large number of investigations and restrictive measures conducted by federal, state and local authorities to uncover or prevent communist infiltration, espionage and sabotage.

Buoyed by the success of the New Deal Act of President Franklin D. Roosevelt which saved the US from the Great Depression of the 30s and later, the Truman Doctrine of military and economic aid to nations threatened by communism, the right-wing bigots and propagandists unleashed off-violent and unprincipled character assassinations and libelous attacks on persons, organisations and even government agencies they thought professed liberal ideology.

Senator Joseph McCarthy literally carried a massive witch hunt into individuals and agencies' private and confidential records to "eke out the red acorns".

communist "front" organisations. Beginning from 1950 and climaxing in May-June 1953, Senator Joseph McCarthy conducted his campaign against communism with 35 days of televised hearings before his sub-committee on "Investigations of government operations. He called and harassed many government officials and individuals in the name of his so-called "investigations".

Thus began the age of anti-heroism. The industrial-military complex and the right wing political muckrakers took advantage of a war-phobic nation's delirium and instilled into its psyche a "fear of a perennial enemy" who is "foreign, dark and Anti-Christ" and perhaps as a post-script we should add, "to live their damaged existence."

Communism came down with the tumbling of the Berlin Wall, symbolic of the Cold War "Iron Curtain". Now was the turn of the Islamic fanatics — the bad guys who bombed the World Trade Centre — and before anyone knew it, the perpetrators of the heinous act of bombing of the Oklahoma City building. The media hate vitriolic was spewing. One elderly lady of a New Jersey suburb on the eve of the trial of Omar Abdel Rahman said, "These people should be kicked out. Hate for hate, violence for violence, an eye for an eye. The people. Not the terrorist. Not the fanatic. It's so easy when

you have your larger than life anti-heroes lurking around your premises for your Rambo, John Wayne or Lieutenant McLean (role played by Bruce Willis in 'Die Hard') to knock them off in one swipe. Even the Communist news media did not relent in their digs at the "decadent malicious Western propaganda." They had only one official news agency through which they doled out bland, rhetorical panegyrics of the State and the Party reminiscent of the "Newspeak" of George Orwell's '1984'. The fearful panoply the Soviet and their allied news media adorned to intimidate their dissidents and critics, especially during the Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev era, unmistakably gave birth to cacophonous diatribes and hate words like "enemy of the state", "enemy of the people", "capitalist parasite" and "revisionist worm" etc. Thus, Andrei Sakharov, Alexei Solzhenitsyn, Zhores Medvedev and Joseph Brodsky were among the countless multitude who were condemned to hard labour in sub-human conditions in Siberian penal camps. Their "thought crime" and "double think" led to their undoing. They were the modern Soviet anti-heroes.

The Era of Anti-heroes

by Mahub Murshed

Saddam Hussein, the Muslim cleric Omar Abdel Rahman. The wider kaleidoscope remained blurred in the background — the U2 spy plane, Bay of Pigs, Peace March, My Lai, Massacres of Sabra and Shatila, Reverend Jim Jones, CIA bombings of Nicaraguan ports, Col. Ollie North with his prep school chauvinism and misplaced adventurism because he took on the Sandinistas, the anti-heroes and helped the Contras — the vanguards of the free world. Such an easy equation!

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"drug overdose". Our role models have all been relegated to "classic soap opera stars".

Amiabh Bachchan steals in order to stay alive. Anil Kapoor kills to avenge the death of his mother. Shahrukh Khan takes away love that he cannot give. The teenage hero of Hollywood commit murder and arson because it is a tough neighbourhood. Tony D, of Detroit inner-city admonishes his arresting officer, after being charged with a crack possession rap. "We are both busted, man." In Colombia, the world moves according to the dictates of the Cali and Medellin drug cartels. Even soccer star Escobar was bumped off when he accidentally put the ball into his own net and sealed the fate of the Colombian soccer team from qualifying for the quarterfinals in the World Cup. Everywhere it is symptomatic of the moral sludge that spills over from schizophrenic societies due to breakdown of family values and spiritual degradation all over the world. From hero worshippers, we have all become devil worshippers simply because we care about daredevils.

Yet then, our cherished goal is to find among us genuine heroes, leaders with unifying visions, who would engage our imaginations and imbue our individual lives with a larger purpose. As Bernard Malamud wrote in 'The Natural', "Without heroes, we're all plain people and don't know how far we can go."

The Daily Star Entertainment Guide

Table with multiple columns listing TV channels (BTV, Channel V, BBC, ZEE TV, STAR Sports, STAR PLUS, PTV) and their respective programs and times.

Garfield by Jim Davis

Garfield comic strip panels. Panel 1: Garfield sits at a table with a coffee cup, looking thoughtful. Panel 2: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 3: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 4: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 5: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 6: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 7: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 8: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 9: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 10: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 11: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 12: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 13: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 14: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 15: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 16: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 17: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 18: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 19: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 20: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 21: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 22: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 23: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 24: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 25: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 26: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 27: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 28: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 29: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 30: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 31: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 32: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 33: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 34: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 35: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 36: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 37: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 38: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 39: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 40: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 41: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 42: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 43: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 44: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 45: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 46: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 47: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 48: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 49: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 50: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 51: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 52: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 53: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 54: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 55: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 56: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 57: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 58: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 59: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 60: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 61: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 62: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 63: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 64: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 65: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 66: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 67: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 68: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 69: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 70: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 71: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 72: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 73: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 74: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 75: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 76: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 77: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 78: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 79: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 80: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 81: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 82: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 83: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 84: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 85: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 86: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 87: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 88: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 89: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 90: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 91: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 92: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 93: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 94: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 95: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 96: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 97: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 98: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 99: Garfield looks at the coffee cup. Panel 100: Garfield looks at the coffee cup.



The Oprah Show on Star Plus today at 2 PM