

Municipal polls

The EC should have acted to weed out criminals from the race

THE stage seems set for elections to Dhaka, Rajshahi and Khulna city corporations on April 25.

Enthusiasm and fervour should have been the by-words for these municipal polls, though. For one thing, these are being held close to three years after their due date.

We have a premonition about the upcoming event which we would like to share with the government and the EC so that the polls can pass off without any untoward incidents.

Sadek Hossain Khoka, the BNP alliance mayoral candidate for Dhaka says that since the AL put the names of BNP activists on their list of terrorists it would be wrong to dub some of the candidates as 'wanted terrorists'.

The polls may not be violence-free just because the participation is one-sided. Although on behalf of the ruling alliance in Dhaka common candidates have been put up, in Khulna two BNP groups have come up with separate lists of nominees.

Canadian commitments

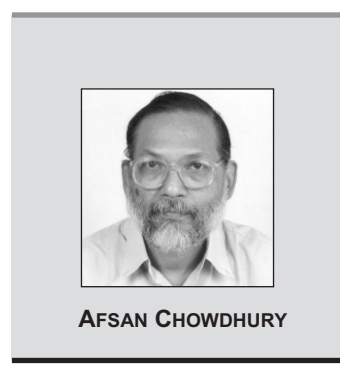
Some positive signs in investment horizon at last

THE prospect for donor assistance to salvage the country's sagging economy has become rather grim, so says Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman.

The Canadian government has expressed keen interest to invest in telecommunications, information technology and gas-based sectors.

The agreement with the Canadian government does open up a much-needed opportunity to bolster the country's information technology, telecommunication and gas-based sectors, and to expand our export basket.

"Don't worry, peace always wins" As Palestine burns



AFSAN CHOWDHURY

HOW many of us would know that one of the countries that came forward to support the Bangladesh liberation war in 1971 was Israel?

"When the matter was brought before the notice of the Bangladesh PM he declined to go ahead.

"Does it ever matter who kills whom?"

WE are witnessing the worst crisis in Palestine till it came into a half-baked existence.

land at first hand, I would have been happy if I could meet someone who could tell me who is to blame for the endless violence.

ist PLO. In Palestine, nationalism was once pre-religious but religion was used to break up a secular enemy.

The Bangladeshi who asks is full of rage towards the US but he is planning to go there anyway.

words I heard in a Hamas procession. He wanted to kill Jews. It wasn't about Palestine, about justice, about anything else.

I met him in one of my trips to Sri Lanka where the arms trade has really gone up.

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART

As the TV was going on and on about the violence in Palestine, I went and opened my almirah drawer and looked at a small wooden pendant carved with the word "shalom" meaning peace in Hebrew.

set up Israel plunk in the middle of its enemies, they could have set up Palestine too next to Israel.

"How many can they kill? How many can they send to the grave? We have many more who are ready to die.

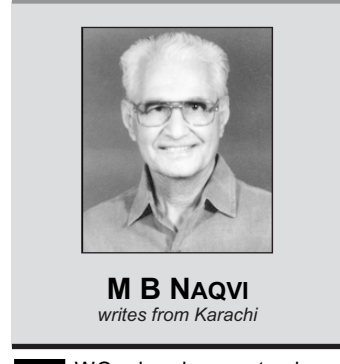
radical Islamic branch of militants right in front of the Al-Azhar Mosque campus in Cairo.

move is on there, maybe it will decline. I met him in the breakfast room. He was a security expert helping people to select the right type of arms to buy.

"You don't think that Palestinians have any rights."

He said all this without smiling, stabbing his food with a fruit knife. I was embarrassed.

Speculation is the name of the game



M B NAQVI writes from Karachi

TWO developments have concentrated the minds of armchair strategists, observers of political scene and those whose business it is to comment.

Various possible scenarios are being formulated. A war had been excluded quite sometime ago.

Forward deployment along the LOC or the working boundary in the area of Jammu-Sialkot could possibly be adjusted for preventing infiltration of Jihadis from Azad Kashmir and Pakistan.

PLAIN WORDS

In fact many more people perceive the Americans to be doing in Pakistan what they set out to do in Afghanistan by military force.

Ordinarily what would suggest that they want to pursue them. The kind of resistance that these defeated Taliban and Al-Qaeda people have shown in eastern Afghanistan was wholly unexpected.

what the really informed Americans are planning. At one level there are fears that they would engage in hot pursuit of the regrouped Taliban and Al-Qaeda men inside

Here the profusion of American media outpourings about domestic political situation of Pakistan becomes relevant.

The supreme irony, of course, is that CIA itself recognized the general threat to the security of US citizens from its dangerous cloak and dagger games abroad and coined the word "blowback" to refer to this threat.

The name of the game for observers in Pakistan is speculation. There are aspects of the complex situation in the region that simply invite speculation and there need be no apology.

MB Naqvi is a leading columnist in Pakistan.

Blowback: Bitter fruit of US foreign policy

HAIDER A. KHAN

ALL of a sudden after the 9/11, the U.S. government and the mass media discovered just how criminal a regime the Taliban really was.

In 1965, the CIA actively supported general Suharto in his bid to topple the nationalist regime of Sukarno in Indonesia and to wipe out the powerful Communist Party(PKI) there.

nesia with iron hand, making it "safe" for Exxon-Mobil, and other foreign investors and his own family.

The stakes are indeed high, and from all the available evidence, not much thought seems to have been given to the broader and long run consequences for the US and the world of another war against Iraq.

intelligence community, and law enforcement circles to the US cause. George Bush Sr. was godfather to one of General Manuel Noriega's children.

died when Stealth planes bombed Chorillo, a working class neighborhood, during the invasion.

In the early 1980s after the overthrow of the pro-U.S. Shah of Iran by Shiite Islamic fundamentalists, the CIA supported and pushed Saddam Hussain to wage war against Iran.

Now, a possible invasion of Iraq could turn into a major long range disaster for not only the people in Iraq and the Middle East, but also for the U.S. foreign policy elite.

Another war against Iraq, which seems to have emerged now as a possible byproduct of the attack against bin Laden, will isolate the U.S. even more.

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Haider A Khan, a faculty member of University of Denver, USA, is currently doing research in Japan.

TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR

Questions for Kibria

Mr. Kibria asserted what we were always trying convey to the politicians, I meant not resorting to falsehood and deceptive tactics

The saying in Bangla, "Mayer Chey-a Mashir Dorod Beshi", is so applicable in our political arena. The people, who talk too much about Bangabandhu, in fact brought his downfall by their psychotic attitude of creating a god out of him.

our so-called politicians. And there is another band of politicians who talk too much about our glorious Liberation War, when they had engaged in questionable actions themselves, during the turbulent days of 1971.

There were many patriotic Bengali government officers who did not join the service during that period in

support of our great cause. Unfortunately, most of our CSP corps did serve the Pakistani Government during the war, and which magically switched side to put on Mujib Coat right after December 16th.

Now these tanks are being loaded onto massive 18wheeler trailers (Mercedes as if you didn't

know) and taken back to the barracks.

In order to save the public from the inevitable traffic jams this would cause, the transportation is done at night. That's unlikely to cause too much of an inconvenience as the convoys would hardly pass any residential areas.

Now that the Middle East is again on everyone's mind, I thought I would share a small fact that will make

Bengalis, even the most pacifist ones like myself, proud.

A Bengali pilot, Squadron Leader (retired) Saiful Islam (ex-director of the Film Development Corporation) is the only man in history to have shot down Israeli combat jets in aerial dogfights.

With all their hi-tech gadgetry and all these Middle East wars, no Syrian, Egyptian, Iraqi, or Jordanian pilot has ever matched this feat.

change facts

I am writing on top of what Mr. F. Majumder wrote in his letter "The horrifying night of Mar 25".

I was born after our independence. To know my roots, my history - I had to rely on books written by renowned writers, stories from heard from my older family members who saw the war themselves.

have to unlearn whatever I've learnt about the history of my country throughout my life.

An independent country is beyond these political games. I dream of government statements with history that gives due credits to all our great leaders who led us to independence.

I hope Mr Anwar Babar ("Highway deaths and Rabindra Sangeet") reads this who had been quite vocal about deaths on the Bangladesh highways. He is questioning if we have set our priorities right and whether anyone cared for what he has been writing about.

He should remember that not so long ago there was a letter in this column "For whom the letters scrol". I doubt if the persons at the helm of this country's power want to pay any heed to what its people are facing and expressing.

Our "leaders" just want to cling to power and make as much money as they can at the quickest possible time. While at it they dwell on use-less issues. How else it can be that almost a week has been spent on the matter of whose portrait(s) to hang?