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A long awaited defeat!



OIC members have saved OIC and the Muslim world as a whole by rejecting the Bangladeshi candidate.

Mir Rashid

On e-mail

It is indeed a great news that the candidate of Bangladesh government, much controversial Mr. Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, an active and violent opponent

of our great war of liberation, was soundly defeated for the post of OIC Secretary General. In an online poll conducted by Prothom Alo, 80 percent of the respondents opposed his candidacy in the first place. It was unfortunate that our 'democratic' government could not find a better candidate about whom we all, irrespective of the political divide, could have been proud of.

In fact, it would have been morally wrong for the OIC to elect a candidate whose candidacy itself was opposed by the bulk of his own compatriots.

Mozammel Khan

On e-mail

Someone doesn't have to be a supporter of Awami League to be happy at the defeat of SQ Chowdhury for OIC top

post. As a Bangladeshi I feel disgraced that we lost the OIC top post. But it would have been more disgraceful had a person like SQ Chowdhury had won the post. I thank the other OIC countries for rightly rejecting a candidate like SQ Chowdhury.

Nayeem Mano, Lubbock, USA

For once we all Bangladeshis can rejoice and revel in a

defeat and we must thank SQ Chowdhury for that. He is not like our cricket team which often brings shame to BD. The great SQ Chowdhury has raised our heads high! Thank you for that.

Ahmad Kamal

Abu Dhabi, UAE

It is unfortunate that Bangladesh's candidate lost the bid to become secretary-general

of the organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), but must he be so ungracious about it?

Mr. Chowdhury's comments, published in this newspaper, were that of a sore loser. Instead of being magnanimous in defeat, he made disparaging comments about Turkey, including questioning their credentials as an Islamic state.

As if this was not enough, he adds insult to injury by

ascribing Turkey's win to "machinations of a pro-Israeli camp." What an absurdity.

In a way I'm glad Mr. Chowdhury did not get elected to the OIC. Judging by the comments he has made, it is obvious to me the BNP did not put their best man forward.

Niraj Agarwalla

On e-mail

Poor TV commercials

I am writing this letter in concern of the one written by Mr. Mahasen (June 16). TV commercials form an inevitable part of programmes on different channels, be they satellite or otherwise. Such commercials are the obvious outcome of the policy of propping up the commercial interests of the concerned TV channels. In this respect, they are sometimes found wanting in upholding proper standards in their contents and modes of presentation. Normal limits of good taste and sense of proportion are sometimes contravened, thereby causing feelings of boredom or repulsion. Hence the necessity on the part of the programme producers to be careful so that their programmes do not prove irksome to viewers.

The staple of our local TV commercials is mainly consumer items like toilet and washing soaps, hair oil, toothpaste, edible oil, beauty aids, milk products, etc. Some of the advertisements for these products, say, soap and beauty aids, are so profuse in number, and the claims of the competing companies as to their benefits are so much of a tall nature, that they leave the consumers confused. When such advertisements are accompanied with the models' gyrations with their attractive faces and willowy shapes, viewers with some iota of good taste and sense of culture may be left cold by such unseemly display.

Among other intolerable features of TV commercials, as observed by irked viewers, is the repetition of the same 10-second commercial several times within

drinks are found to resort to ingenious and attractive commercials featuring well-known film actors and actresses and even famous cricketers. It is easy to imagine what a tremendous impact such commercials create on the minds of easily impressionable youngsters, particularly children. Sometimes such commercials include offers of prizes for purchases, besides soft drinks, chocolates, milk foods, chewing gum, etc. with concealed lucky numbers inside the packets in some cases, thereby keeping their buyers in suspense about the results of draws.

While we discourage smoking within the country, we notice attractive commercials about some brands of cigarettes telecast on satellite channels from outside the national borders. This may be considered unfortunate because the young viewers, who have easy access to cable TV, come under adverse impact on account of such undesirable commercials.

Of course, there are some positive aspects of TV commercials, such as when they announce concessions in prices of some essential electronic items like fridge, TV, micro-oven, and other household appliances on festive or other special occasions, as they help in creating a desirable consumer culture for a better standard of life.

Speaking of The Shadows, they were the band who played with Cliff Richard. In fact they also starred in a few films with Cliff, such as "The Young Ones." But the reason I remember them is because of the following.

How many of the people in

a private news agency last week, Malaysian Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said it would be easier to work to reform the organisation if his country holds both the chairman and secretary general's posts. "That being the reason," he pointed out, "we thought the best way is to put up our candidature" for the OIC secretary general. Now that the Turkish candidate has been elected, Malaysia should give up the chairmanship, for the same reasons that Malaysia wanted the post. Is there even a minuscule possibility of this happening?

Haluk Ozdemir

On e-mail

Nostalgia

I was watching the Sky TV News this afternoon, when the news was broadcast that The Shadows have called it a day and they never will play again. Cliff Richard, the British singer, who was once the "Pop Idol" of Britain, sang with them some oldies. This brought me back some nostalgic memory from yesteryears, when Pat Boone, Dean Martin, Ricky Nelson, Elvis Presley, Connie Francis, Doris Day etc were the kings/queens of the Pops. I can still remember "Hello Mary Lou", "Rhythm of the Rain", "G. I. Blue", "Volare" and the list goes on and on.

I think memory is painful, because it reminds us of a time when things were different, the climate was different, the environment was different and we miss our dear ones who were with us at that time and above all we cannot go back to that time.

Jamilul Huq

Lalmatia, Dhaka

Cambridge launches GCE O Level Bangladesh Studies

2006 and 2007 as many schools, such as BIS, BIT, British School of Law, Mapleleaf, Mastermind, Scholastica, Sunbeams, as well as provincial schools, have indicated their intention to enter candidates for the Cambridge GCE O Level in Bangladesh Studies.

2) We will not need to produce English translations of the textbooks of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board as these already exist. These books are on our reading list, along with other suggested teaching resources. In addition, as mentioned by your correspondent, a textbook will be produced in collaboration with teachers in Bangladesh.

Helen Imam
Product Manager, University of Cambridge International Examinations

Mumbai train tragedy

A tragic train derailment left at least 20 dead and about 100 injured in western India. According to the Railways officials bad weather and heavy downpour could be one of the reasons of the accident. The way the authority responded in rescue operation is really appreciable.

The Railway Minister, Laloo Prasad Yadav, cancelled his official programmes and rushed to the accident site along with Railway Board members from Kolkata to personally supervise the relief and rescue work.

In our country we have seen enough deaths in water and an unfazed minister keeps blaming it all on fund shortage. We really cannot blame him either, because after spending so much time trying to secure different 'deals', he has little time to concentrate on, what is supposed to be his actual duty. Will we ever learn to do something for the country other than making a personal fortune?

Sumon

Dhaka

Psychological counselling needed

Depression is a psychological state that makes it difficult to cope with the uncertainty and complexity of day to day life. Deprived of love, sympathy, disintegration of families, failure in materialistic pursuits of happiness are chiefly responsible for it. If not taken care of timely, like a deadly disease, depression makes life lethargic and gradually glides a person's life to rejection.

For this, in the western countries, whenever people undergo depression of any sort, they contact psychiatrists and take medical treatments and counselling in order to get along with normal flow of life. But in our country, the scenario is different. If anyone consults a psychiatrist even for a minor reason, most of the people can't take it normally. That's why, instead of seeking counselling, depressed people hide their crisis just to save them-

selves from being laughed at. Sometimes their insecurity pushes them to spiritual practices. Consequently, their social interaction becomes narrower and they seclude themselves in a confined world.

So, organisations related to human rights should raise the importance of counselling for mental fitness and help mentally distressed people to lead a normal life through remedy.

Rubab Abdullah

Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka

DU hall: Den of

abductors?

Abduction has become a good business thanks to the indifference and sometimes the direct collaboration of police with the abductors. The Jamaluddin abduction case, where we have seen more than one directive to rescue him even by the home minister, is still unsolved and he is still untraceable.

A section of student wings of leading political parties at Dhaka University has long been allegedly involved in the 'business' of abduction. They reportedly take their victims to the dormitory and

confine them there to realise the ransom. It is always difficult for police to raid a dormitory and it requires permission from the university authority to do so. The culprits have probably been using this immunity for a long time.

Much has been said about banning student and teacher politics. But I guess we have to live with the 'multipurpose use' of the student dormitory.

Joy

Dhaka

Failed government

I felt drawn to the write-up captioned 'Failed State and Bangladesh' by the DS Editor which appeared in your esteemed daily recently. He has virtually echoed the sentiments of the nation by refusing to describe Bangladesh a 'Failed State' as was sought to be portrayed by a certain circle in the western media.

Truly, if we have a failing state we are left with nothing, even our very existence as an independent nation becomes meaningless. We hope, as indicated in the write-up, that those using such uncharitable expressions for Bangladesh have erred on the fine distinction between the terms 'Failed State' and 'Failed Government'. As indeed, the incumbent government have so far failed to inspire hope in our people's mind because of its object failure in state management, denting the social fabric crucially.

I am, however, not persuaded enough with the arguments presented in the write-up to summarily sign off a democratically elected government with a conclusive verdict like 'Failed Government' prematurely before the expiry of its incumbency. To be politically correct, I would rather opt for the epithet 'Poor Governance' instead of 'Failed Government'.

Syed Badrul Haque

Lalmatia, Dhaka

Democratic dictators?

I think, till now the total number of times Mr. Bush and Mr. Blair has been cursed and criticised by the people of the world has exceeded the number of times Hitler has been criticised and cursed. Many compare Bush with Hitler unhesitatingly. But we are forgetting one thing and that is 'this is the age of democracy where sovereignty belongs to the people and not to a person'.

Now the question arises if sovereignty belongs to the people, how come the rulers are being able to implement their own decisions against the public opinion. For every policy he makes, the ruler is heavily scrutinised. Now my point is, Mr. Bush and Mr. Blair were voted to power. And as rulers of democracies they are accountable to the people.

But in reality are they acting democratically enough? Therefore, what is the difference between dictatorship and democracy?

Kalid, Old DOHS, Dhaka

PHOTO: AFP

15-20 minutes spans. Another vexing sight on some popular TV channels is the parade of a good number of commercials by several sponsoring agencies, interposed in the middle of an interesting serials or feature films. Such occurrences tend to destroy the mood of many viewers, sometimes driving them to switch off the TV set in anger.

Some aspects of the commercials as they appear from time to time in the programmes may strike some viewers as galling. The makers of some leading soft

sustained efforts on the part of the TV producers to eliminate irksome elements in TV commercials.

Ishita Rahman

Financial Development Project, World Bank, Dhaka

KL unlikely to quit race for OIC job

In the news article "KL unlikely to quit race for OIC job" (June 15), the DS reported:

In an interview with Enayetullah Khan, Chief Editor of

Bangladesh know that in the year 1964, when the then "Pilot Television" service of "East Pakistan" was started, the signature tune was a Shadows tune. "Apache" was another of the Shadows' hit played regularly on Dhaka Television.

I can remember that we used to eagerly turn on the TV set (NEC 19" black and white and with valves, so naturally, heavy) and listen to "Purano Shei Diner Katha" by Debabrata, "Tumi Bolechhile" by Shubir Sen and all the wonderful songs on TV. They

thank you for reporting the launch of the Cambridge GCE O Level in Bangladesh Studies (Daily Star, 16 June). I would, however, like to point out two inaccuracies:

1) There are currently seven schools in Bangladesh, not two, entering candidates for University of Cambridge International Examinations. This figure will grow to 12 in 2005 as other schools will begin to take examinations. Furthermore, we anticipate that the number of schools will increase significantly from

Bhutan, refugees and the SAARC leaders

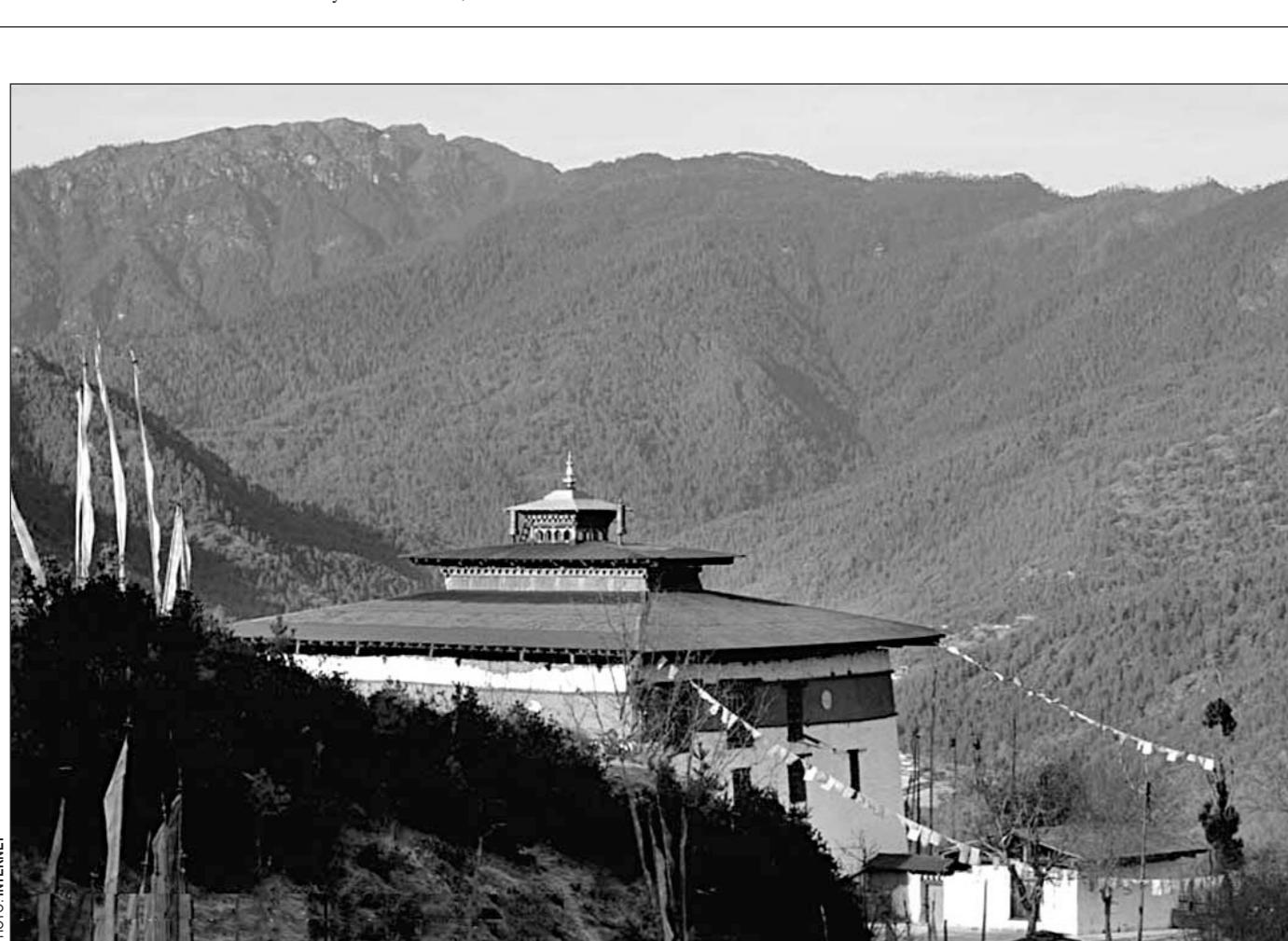
Immediately after my return from Nepal the TV picture of the meeting between Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina and Bhutanese ambassador to Bangladesh raised many questions in my mind. I remember with honour that Bhutan was the first country to recognise Bangladesh. After that Bhutan was very special to me, and not only me but I am sure also to many Bangladeshis. I used to listen to the speeches by the present King very carefully during the SAARC summits. I have become a regular buyer of Druk products, but after my visit to Nepal I'm a bit disillusioned about Bhutanese rulers.

Recently it seems the King has become a victim of circumstances created by himself. Some Bhutanese refugees living in Nepal have told me about the inhuman acts. Until 1985 there were no dissidents in Bhutan despite its ethnic diversity, and Bhutan was called the Land of the Peaceful Dragon. But after the passing of a new Citizenship Act by the King, the real problem started. Thousands of Southern Bhutanese lost home, land, and livelihood within a short period of time. Citizens who were living for generations in harmony were forced out of their lands because they spoke

Nepali. They were subjected to atrocious treatment such as arbitrary arrest, torture, and detentions without trial, village raids and widespread inhuman and degrading treatment including rape; the closure of most schools in Southern Bhutan; the restriction of health services; a ban on the movement of the essential commodities and people; confiscation of citizenship cards and termination of employment; burning and demolition of houses. Such treatment made their life unbearable and forced them out of their lands and their country.

Now there are over 100,000 Bhutanese living in exile as refugees in Nepal and India. So when there is any meeting between South Asian heads of state or key figures, I feel, the issues of discrimination must be discussed so that there may be sharing of ideas in bringing about just and peaceful resolution to all inter-community conflicts. Although these are sensitive issues, goodwill from South Asian leaders is necessary to remove all sorts of discrimination.

Kamaluddin Ahmed
Shamoly, Dhaka



Say yes to "sports"

Our world is full of so many evils and chaos that there is hardly any scope left for the people to enjoy pure entertainment. The world was possibly never free from the curse of war and still is haunted by this curse. The terrifying pictures of dead bodies and injured have horrified the people of the people. People seem to be tired watching the same news everyday as condition of the world aggravates day by day. There is no justice prevailing in the present world. But still somewhere in the world justice always wins. And that is a sports field.

When we watch a match, be it football or cricket, we seem to forget the chaos and injustice of the world. In the field of football, no injustice is allowed. If you do a foul you will be punished instantly by being shown yellow or red card. In cricket too, two umpires are always standing to ensure that no injustice is being done to the players. So, it is sports of any kind that gives some solace and relief to the souls of strife-torn people of modern day. Sports delight our soul, though in limits; it fulfills our dream of seeing a world free from injustice and hostilities.

So, the on-going Euro 2004 brings the much needed opportunity for the people all over the world to forget the strivings and confusions of everyday life at least for a few hours daily. It is highly prescribed for the politicians of the world as well to watch all the games of Euro 2004 or any other sports they are interested in to learn how to be sportive. After all, they need the