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Our image abroad: What image?

At a moment when the nation is going through a very serious political crisis, we have been provided comic relief from unexpected quarters. This came from the *tamasha* arranged by the foreign ministry by bringing 7 of the 11 ex-foreign secretaries together for a meeting with the prime minister to tell her what to do about our image crisis! (DS August 28th) This government has to be serious if it wants to come out of this mess. Why does the PM need any ex-foreign secretary to tell her the problem with our image abroad? I am no expert about matters of diplomacy but like me, there are many who know exactly where this crisis originates and it is time to tell this PM about it in plain words.

In nearly three years since people sent the alliance to office with a two thirds majority, it has squandered the chance to lead the nation. Madam Prime Minister, your law enforcing agencies have failed to unravel even one of the major blasts and killings in the last one year or so. While your law enforcing agencies were failing around you, you have vacated the Ministry of Home Affairs of the cabinet minister and kept it in charge of a junior minister. You have as your Political Adviser someone who shamed everyone by his recent failure at the OIC-SG election and then followed this shameful defeat with utterances before the press about Sheikh Hasina .Your utterly inept security agencies, to throw you into confusion, brought reports against your senior ministers that you have believed while allowing the agencies to go unquestioned for their failure to nab any criminal connected with the spate of political killings and blasts in recent times.

I am sure none of the FS in the meeting with you pointed any of these. Get out of this situation, accept responsibility and show the courage to lead. You and your foreign ministry can worry about our image later, for our image is hardly the issue at the moment.

Shahjahan Ahmed
Dhanmondi RA, Dhaka

Where is unity?

The whole country is grief-stricken by the incident of August 21, 2004. It is a known fact that grief brings people closer, make them united, but alas, it is not so in our country. This unfortunate incident seems to have broadened the rift between the government and the political parties. Instead of joining hands to bring to task the criminals who have committed this heinous crime, the opposition political parties have decided to launch a 'one point movement', the aim of which is to unseat the government. In the present situation, the investigation into the assassination attempt on Sheikh Hasina should get top priority, and investigation should go on till the miscreants are caught. We are baffled by the stance taken by the Awami League. They are not only detaching themselves from the investigation but are also making the task difficult by launching anti-government activities. What does the opposition hope to gain through these agitation programmes? The agitation programmes will not only hinder the investigation process but will also make them lose the sympathy of the people, who will eventually think that the Awami League's only desire is to capture power. The opposition parties are perpetually blaming the government of being incapable of providing adequate security, but are they not aware of the fact that, many advanced countries, in spite of their efficient intelligence services are not being able to combat destructive incidents. What a mess our politicians have made!! our dream for a country of which we could have been proud of has been torn to pieces. The downward fall has started, unless the politicians come to their senses, the country will get lost in an abyss of no return.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong

Good editorial

This is to express my appreciation of The Daily Star's editorial on 30 August. It was explicit, clearly focused and had a very definite objective. The issue was clearly analysed and properly put forward.

Despite the fact that we need a media that can guide this nation at this critical juncture towards a clear understanding on pressing issues to

Ahmadiyya issue



PHOTO: AFP

There are some disturbing news about Bangladesh. May Allah protect the people and the country from evil.

The important question at the root of the present trouble is the Muslim or non-Muslim status of the Ahmadiyyas. It is surprising that the Ulama do not tell the general public about certain important *Hadith* of the holy Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) I quote one below:

The Holy Prophet said, "Any one who recited our Kalimah and eats from our food and faces our Qiblah is a Muslim. There is a guarantee of protection for him from God and the Prophet. O Muslims, do not ever break (violate) that guarantee".

Another important information is recorded in books of *Hadith*:

During the first census at Madina, the workers asked the Prophet about who should be written (or recorded) as Muslim, the Prophet replied that whosoever calls himself Muslim (or says that he is a Muslim) you write him down for me as Muslim. So, the point is clear.

Ghulam Sarwar
Karachi, Pakistan

I have read with keen interest your editorial of the 29th under the caption "Police Thwart Anti Ahmadiyya Plan". I am in complete agreement with your observation. Indeed given the will and the right resolve it is possible for any government to effectively deal with an issue like this. Conversely, from this example one is likely to draw a conclusion that the government's failure in earlier cases of the nature like that of the Bangla Bhai was due to both complacency and deliberate negligence on the part of the government. It also clearly establishes the fact that the government, for reasons not understandable to the people of the country, is protecting and giving license to similar unlawful activities under pressure from its coalition of so called Islamic parties. It is my impression that if this government continues with its current attitude with regard to cases of the nature past or present from here onwards, it will further lose public support.

Shamsher Chowdhury
Dhaka

save our people from the wrath of the criminal politics of today, regrettably we don't find anything like that.

My strong belief is that if the media played its due role towards the betterment of our people in a united manner, things would have been much better today. Consider the news and editorials of the same day on the same issue. The stories and reports differ greatly.

Your editorial, I am sure, has drawn the attention of the readers. Please keep it up.

Today's (31.08) editorial also gives a positive direction. Please allow me to say something- the Bar council is now ready to wield power against the highest chair of the judiciary, why couldn't it use the same for clearing the mess and anomalies that is eating up the whole institution?.

MM Haque
Jeddah, KSA

A legitimate question

The BNP thinks that the Awami League does not want an enquiry

(even if one doesn't not see any attempt by the ruling alliance to avoid it). But perhaps, it would be possible to have dialogues between Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman and Awami League leader SAMS Kibria. Hopefully, if that happens, the nation could be immensely benefited. The agenda of such a dialogue should focus on economic issues first and for that, Mr. Saifur Rahman have to exchange experiences with an open mind. Mr. Kibria was successful in attaining the highest ever growth rate of the GDP for the country. It must also be noted that Mr. Kibria succeeded in keeping prices of daily necessities quite stable throughout the five years of Awami rule.

The nation should certainly look forward to such constructive dialogues on economic issues.

Prof. SAM
Monipuripara, Dhaka

Not the last...

I could not but write something as my conscience is killing me. What will be the fate of our motherland? The 21 August grenade attack made me speechless for a few minutes. I couldn't think of such barbarity.

In this connection I would like to point out to the extremists that our tradition as well as the religion of peace "Islam" do not have any place for violence.

It is not the last but the latest attack and we may have to survive many more attacks in future. Let's face the challenge from the common platform of peace and democracy.

Foyed Ahmed
Shamoly, Dhaka

'Bomb culture' must be uprooted

Bomb throwing must be stopped to save democracy. The AL is the worst victim of the bomb attacks. The criminals did not hesitate to commit such heinous crimes because no action was taken against the arms smugglers in Chittagong. The government has also failed to punish "Bangla Bhai" and killings still continue. Nobody would believe that intelligence services have no idea about the whereabouts of "Bangla Bhai" and the arms smugglers in Chittagong.

Let us look back to the activities of the AL. It ruled the country for five years but did not take actions against the terrorists of its own party. So it is unlikely that the BNP and the AL can uproot terrorism. We should choose the right leaders.

Dr. Mahboob Hossain
Niigata University of Pharmacy,
Niigata, Japan

The rooster will return...

These days all the letters to the editors in almost all newspapers are about the 21 August attack on Sheikh Hasina's life. All the writers, whether they live in Bangladesh or abroad, condemned this attack. Some writers even expressed their feeling that the government has failed to govern the country and fear that the country has become unfit to live in. There are some who have openly mentioned that the religious fundamentalists are responsible for this and other previous attacks. The ruling party is not spared. No one seems to believe that the enquiry by one judge or the police departments will bring out anything substantial.

Just imagine if the bombers had succeeded in their mission on Aug 21, would they have stopped there? Who would be the next target? Did the killing process stop with the assassination of Bangabandhu? Didn't something happen on May 31, 1981? The rooster will come home someday. It is only a question of time.

A senior citizen
On e-mail

No school for children

Current continuous hartals have caused a great amount of loss to the school going students, especially those, who had their school reopened after a long vacation. It is a sad sight to see your children doing nothing staying home day after day. We do protest the grisly incident that took place on the late afternoon of the 21 August, 2004 and we do mourn the death of the people along with Mrs Ivy Rahman but we do not expect this incident would put our children's education



PHOTO: AFP

Political turmoil

Apart from recurring natural calamities, hard line activities of the political parties have seriously hampered our economy. After the flood is gone, people began to set about their work to offset the loss. But to our hard luck, the deadly grenade assault on the AL rally has erupted a new trend of violence throughout the

country that may go on until the next election. In the last term, the alliance government faced the same setback on the issue of 'Caretaker Govt.'. This time its failure to rein the culprits in, has raised questions about our public security. As we know that party politics in our country is motivated to capture power and the AL, bearing the brunt

of these deadly attacks, will agitate its workers as well as countrymen for a change. The counter-action of the alliance may further worsen the situation. Consequently, new investment and financial activities may come to a standstill. Let alone the foreign investors, our own businessmen are losing their zeal in trade and

commerce. If there is a chance for capital transfer, they would avail it in due course. So we urge the government to take necessary measures to ensure security of our lives and expect the opposition parties would refrain from calling 'hartal' that cripples our economy.

Ehsan, Noyatola

that the law makers can never ignore.

Isn't there a similarity between the BJP leaders and our politicians? The point should provide food for thought to all concerned.

Atik Rahman
Dhaka University

Please stop it!

I applaud Khleda Zia for her bold attempt to meet the leader of the opposition Sheikh Hasina. She has done the right thing. That's what we needed in a crisis situation like this.

On the other hand, the way the leader of the opposition acted, I

shun this policy of blaming the rivals. Try to innovate something else to show your grief and stop mindless torching and smashing of vehicles, and calling hartal.

HT

On e-mail

Sound pollution

First I would like to express my deep concern and grief over the brutal killing of our national leader Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, 29 years ago Obviously the day 15 August is charged with emotion as far as the followers of the AL are concerned. I pray to the

sure' is not for adults. It is for HSC students and here the author (LAG Strong) wrote about his childhood experience about reading thrillers, not pin-up magazines. Mr. Mahfuzul Haque asked the readers a question about thrillers, music and action movies not art. So I did not comment about art. Yes, I am also quite confused about art as it sometimes displays indecency in the name of world famous works. We discussed thrillers not pin-up magazines and I quoted Strong's opinion about reading thrillers. As far as I know (as I never had the appetite to flip

Bush's future



PHOTO: AFP

It is a response to the letter of Nurjahan Islam published on July 21, 2004 in The Daily Star. She raised a moral question- "Should not he be brought to justice? Yes, President GW Bush should be, but how? The procedure lies in his position!

The concurrent anecdotes in and outside the US

give the answer to the question on justice in point. Generally, the interior of the US provide the Oval Office a tyrannical authority over foreign affairs that is now being exercised with two standards in the Middle East-- one in Iraq and another in Israel, as well as, the whole world. With such a policy the Bush

administration has dissociated the Americans from other nations(except a few governments). And it is the Americans who can bring an end to the highhandedness by unseating it in the next elections.

Nazmul Islam
Zahurul Haque Hall,
Dhaka University,
Dhaka

Politicians think alike!

On August 26, India's Parliament passed the national budget without the main opposition party (BJP). BJP boycotted the parliament accusing Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of insulting them. The matter was rather trifling. The BJP wanted to discuss about the budget at a private meeting with Manmohan Singh. But he refused to talk to them at a private meeting. He told them that the discussion would take place in the parliament only. But the BJP considered it an insult to them. That's why the party stayed away from the parliament during the budget approval. Our politicians do this very often. People elected them to raise their voice on behalf of them. And it's customary in a democracy that every parliamentarian has to be present during the budget session. Of course, budget is such an important thing

found it utterly unacceptable. She should have accepted this olive branch and should have tried to settle the disputes between them once and for all and give the people a respite from their egoistic clashes, which have put the country in a limbo.

I doubt if the AL will gain any sympathy from the people by calling these hartals and vandalising public and governmental properties in the name of protesting the gruesome attack. It's understandable that you people are angry and hurt that your leaders were attacked and a number of your activists were killed. Not only you, we too were as much traumatised by this carnage. Then how come you can set fire to trains and buses carrying innocent people? Isn't that an attempt to slaughter people? There is no need to remind you how these people felt about it. You guys know how does one feel when his/her near and dear ones come under attack. Don't you think that your deeds could be termed as terrorism as well?

If you really want to see the country prosper, I will urge you to

Almighty so that He keeps the soul of our great leader in eternal peace.

But do the AL and its supporting bodies keep themselves doing the same? Every year they are creating unbearable sound pollution by loud speakers ringing the speech of 7th March, patriotic songs, and similar things repeatedly from dawn to dusk in almost all residential areas of the cities on 15 August. The worst affected segments are the children and old who stay at home all the time.

M Lutfur Rahman
West Kafrul, Dhaka

Speechless

This is in response to the letter 'Don't read only for pleasure' by Dr. Shaquaat Waheed (Aug 21). Dr. Waheed's letter left me virtually speechless by its mindless distortion of what I wrote and its wanton advice about things which I did not write. The style and contents of the letter is so degrading that it falls on the verge of a personal attack. The HSC level story 'Reading for Plea-

through one) Masud Rana is not a pin-up magazine. We also discussed action movies which I told him to watch if he likes.

So please do not bring up things that were written neither by Mr. Haque nor by Strong, nor by me. If Mr. Haque wrote about pin-up magazines and the likes I would never have respond to his letter. Both children and adults should be saved from the vicious world of pin-up magazines and the likes. Mr. Haque, it is good news that you left Masud Rana because you did not like it and not because your father does not like it (Writing back Aug 20).

Durdana Ghias
Dept. of Economics, DU

Embarrassing indeed

It was most probably 19 August when my friend and I were moving past the Dhaka Mayor Bhaban, we saw three foreigners singing a song for making Dhaka a clean city. They rendered the songs in Bangla and English.

Wasn't it a bit embarrassing for the citizens? **Mr Fakhrul Islam (Chanchal)**
Dapa, Fatullah,
Narayanganj



PHOTO: AFP