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Weak political base

Bangladesh politics is facing a bleak future. The political foundation is weak in depth and breadth. No dedicated home work was carried out to improve the political stability.

The main cause was that the liberation in 1971 was gained in merely nine months, compared to decades of painful movements in other countries. Now politics is based on

charisma, which is a subjective approach for long-term goals. The current question is: first the party, or the country? Now two other factors have entered the political field: corruption and religion.

The later is a tricky issue: tackle with the head (rational approach) or the heart (faith)? The opposition is taking advantage of the situation by pumping 'Secularism'. It complicates the national approach, and more so for the vast majority living around the poverty level (economics).

At the top level of the society (a microscopic minority controlling all the strings of the society) materialism has become an attractive philosophy of life (aping the rich West).

Man is not an angel!

The opposition does not attend the parliament (regardless of the name of the party), but fly the flags of democracy in street agitations. Our street politics has become more important to exploit the artless masses. We cannot even manage the street traffic!

The clever political leaders have to pay compensation for their national lapses. None would be surprised if there is a third phase of non-political rule in the near future, with the two main parties engaged in a tug of war, without taking the nation forward. Static dynamism! Now it is easier for the foreign powers to bring about any undesirable change, as they are interested in the

energy reserves in Bangladesh. The big neighbour has already started using Bangladesh as a hinterland.

The politicians are facing three main challenges: external threats, external religious monitoring coupled with internal religious agitation (with violence); and, corruption. The later is being used as an advantage by the self-motivated politicians, but it would rebound (Newton's Third Law); as internal rifts hog the headlines.

Now the basic issue is: self-survival (of the existing political parties) or survival of the state? The definition of the latter is being questioned. When a menu is still in the drafting stage, the dinner



cannot be served in time!

The regime is not publicising the basic approaches—only spotlighting the ad hoc development projects. There is no moral development, only physically visible flags. We are victims of cosmetic politics.

The prime minister has to act more like a PM most of the time, than as a party leader. This difference has become a

sensitive issue now. Too much leniency is being shown to the undesirable activities of the party field units. Discipline has to be tough internally. Overall majority is not a safe cover. Internal ventilation is needed, to remove political greenhouse effect. The mobile courts are raiding the food establishments. What about political pollution? To err is human,

including the politicians! Statesmanship in leadership has to be made more visible. Sycophancy is selling at a premium. Now the so-called "leaders" depend on the followers. It should be the other way round. Start cleaning from the top, rather than trim at the bottom. AMahasen Dhaka



JFK
Further to Mr. Kamrul Hassan's letter, I would like to dwell a little more on the broader aspect of the film 'JFK'.

Based on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy the film follows the investigation by the late District Attorney Jim Garrison—the only man ever to bring this case to trial.

Originally released in 1991, JFK, winner of two Oscars, is a must-see

how a faceless conspiracy is executed in such precision as in killing a president!

Oliver Stone received a lot of flak from critics of his own country and was even accused of "distorting the history". Yet he remains like a major portion of his countrymen and people around the world convinced that JFK's assassination was not the act of lone gunman.

On January 15, 1992 the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., invited Oliver Stone to speak before

Stone can make a film like JFK questioning the very foundation of the US Government and is recognised by being nominated for the Academy Awards is an ample testimony to how such right is practised.

Can we imagine a filmmaker doing the same in Bangladesh and come out unscathed? Reaz Shaheed DOHS Banani

the people: it refers to examples in Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, India and China but is relevant to all regions. It is 900 words long.

The UN Summit of 14-16 September is reviewing the (failing) Millennium Development Goals, including the commitment to provide free primary education for all. Mark Baillie, One-e-mail

Bush and Blair



Millions of people across the US, UK and some other countries of Europe rose against the war on Iraq. George Galloway, the member of the British Parliament, renewed his condemnation of the US and British leaders over the 2003 invasion of Iraq at a huge rally in Washington last Saturday.

Galloway clearly termed Bush and Blair as "War Criminals". He received a roaring reception from the crowd when he said in his speech: "there is an absolute need for your country and my country to stand shoulder to shoulder against the war criminals Tony Blair and George W. Bush."

Protesters, about 10,000 and beyond, stood around the White House with their children in front and the students beat drums chanting "Bring the troops home Now."

There was a huge congregation in Hyde Park in London as well. Speakers like Cindy Sheehan, whose 24-year-old son Casey, was killed in Iraq last year and the outspoken George Galloway received the biggest crowd response. Galloway further pointed out that these two men Bush-Blair failed to justify the invasion of Iraq. He added, "This is not a clash between people of the West and East, not a war between Christianity and Islam, George W. Bush does not represent any civilisation."

Amidst all this criticism and protests Blair is speculating that the insurgency has become more ferocious than he anticipated! But he warned that he would not pull out the soldiers before the building of Iraq! Bush is singing the same song! Now one wonders what sort of destruction and reconstruction they have been doing in Iraq they only let loose the genocide on a modest land.

Hypocrisy thy name is democracy!
Rafiqul Islam Rime, Agrabad, Chittagong

Herbal medicine factory

We appreciate the government's recent actions against the producers of contaminated and unhygienic foods and herbal medicines. But it is not clear yet if these actions are limited to Dhaka only or anything is really happening elsewhere in the country. I know several herbal medicine factories in Rajshahi. Local people believe these factories are making money out of dirt or ashes of cowdung.

The authorities concerned should probe the matter. S. Akhter, University of Rajshahi

Rape and media's role

It is the tendency of our media to focus on the raped woman instead of the rapist. They try their utmost to reveal the miseries of the victim. What do they think? By introducing the victim in front of the people, they are hurting her even more. In our conservative society, the victim has to suffer more afterwards because she has to bear the humiliation. So please leave her alone.

If you feel sorry for her then show your guts by focusing on the rapist in front of the world and demand exemplary punishment to him. Ashek Hammed, One-e-mail

Drug trafficking in Chittagong

Our government is determined to stop all kinds of illegal work going on since long and for that reason the government took the bold step of creating Rab and they have done something with sincerity, although there was a lot of criticism about them. But the main problem is that they have also failed to prove themselves to be above question. Chittagong is a port city and since long there was a drug trafficking zone in Chittagong situated in the railway station area which is called Barisal colony, but what is very unexpected is that the drug sellers are doing their business under the very nose of the law enforcers. And the administration is doing nothing against them.

Sometimes they raid their hideouts, but the drug traffickers come back and start their business in full swing. Shahed, One-e-mail

Education for the poor

This surprising academic study shows that the some of poorest parents in the world are choosing private education for their children, reversing the image of privilege and bringing decision-making back to

Our economy

I had a chance to read through the 'Bangladesh in the twenty first century' written by A. M. A. Muhiith, who is an eminent economist and development practitioner. The book presents an optimistic picture of the future of Bangladesh. According to the author, with political will and economic effort Bangladesh can become an industrial society in an integrated world economy in the year 2040. I agree with the author on the issue of political will, as political unrest is the major problem of our country. So, without political stability we cannot expect our economy to develop. Md Shafiqul Alam Emon London South Bank University London, UK

Future of Pakistan

Well, Pakistan hasn't done well or may I say that it hasn't progressed well in the last 10 years. As a Pakistani I see that development and industrialisation has been dormant for a long time. The progress it has made is not very significant and in spite of the fact that it became a nuclear power. Pakistan has lots of talented people but their talent and expertise have not been utilised, for this failure we Pakistanis are responsible. The problem is, we Pakistanis don't use our brains and we don't allow planners and thinkers to form separate groups to find solution to a problem. In case of regional alliance Pakistan has got a golden opportunity since the demise of the Soviet Union to form a regional alliance with the Central Asian Nations. It seems that Pakistan doesn't know that there are landlocked countries north of its border. These are Muslim countries and they have many things common with us, many of them have Persian as their language which is the elder sister of Urdu language. Emperor Babar and Humayun were born in Farganah valley, which is now in Uzbekistan. The landlocked Central Asian countries can use the Pakistani seaport of Gwadar and that will lead to tremendous development in Baluchistan.

There are lots of opportunities available in this big world, we have to keep our eyes open and when the time comes, just grab the opportunity. Masood Khan Chittagong, UK

Teletalk service

Teletalk has been the most sensational mobile company in Bangladesh. Everybody knows the history of the thrilling lottery for selecting the lucky subscribers; before that, people even tore their shirts and perspired to have that

golden deer, keeping a serial even a night or day before delivering forms for the sim card. It has attained thousands of customers within a short period of time throughout the country.

I wish its more and more success; but my contention is its call rate is too high. Teletalk advertised that it would provide its customers with 15 and 30 seconds pulse; but in reality the situation is different. All the official holidays including Fridays were supposed to be considered as off peak and late night (12:00-6:00am) as super off peak hour, but the customers are not getting that benefit. It also has lots of mechanical and net working problems. Mohammad Saiful Islam Khan Dept. of English Jahangirnagar University

Thirty marks in teacher's hand

Many experiments on education have been conducted in order to innovate such an educational system that will be suitable for the age to impart better education to students. With this end in view, the NCTB has introduced a new unified educational system in the secondary level which is supposed to come into effect next year. I along with others appreciate and welcome this new initiative as this will provide every student with the unbarred opportunity of gaining knowledge in every discipline of science, arts and commerce.

According to the new syllabus prescribed for class six to nine, 30 marks out of 100 in each subject will be kept at teacher's disposal. And this has given rise to many questions. We know coaching centres are mushrooming these days and many of them are owned by the teachers. If 30 marks are given in the hands of the teachers, they will take illegal advantage of it. They will not give the students the numbers they deserve unless and until the students admit themselves into their coaching centres. Thus the students will be held hostage to the teachers' whims as well as despotism. The teachers will be more interested to teach the students at their respective coaching centre than at the schools. As a result, the standard of education at the schools will further go down. Besides, the local bigwigs will try to exert influence on the teachers. Consequently, the system will be misused to a great extent.

Last but not the least, the poor but meritorious students studying at different universities and colleges will be in trouble since they depend on private coaching as their source of income.

Taking all these into account, the authorities concerned, therefore, should reconsider their decision of leaving 30 marks in the teacher's hand. Ramprasad Banik Jahangirnagar University

Session jam at science faculty

The University of Dhaka which is called the Oxford of the East is now

severely affected by a malady called 'Session Jam! Filthy student and teacher politics is mainly responsible for this. Though all the disciplines of the university are affected by session jam, the science faculty is the worst affected. This faculty is far behind other faculties. There are several reasons for this. First, classes are not held regularly. As a result, the courses are also not completed in time. Second, students and teachers are engaged in politics. Third, the lengthy process of examination is also responsible for the loss of time. It takes more than one year and a half to finish an academic year. And it takes almost eight years to finish honours and masters courses. We look at the social welfare and the law faculty, we will see that the students of the 2001-02 batch have already completed their 3rd year, and 4th year classes are going on. But the students of the same batch in science faculty have not yet started their third year classes.

We humbly request the university authorities to look into the matter. Mustafa Iqbal Shahadat University of Dhaka

An indifferent state!

Bangladesh is not an inactive state, it is an indifferent state. We can compare Bangladesh with an indifferent family. In an indifferent family, many unexpected things occur. Because the guardian of the family does not take care of it. So, we can say, Bangladesh is an indifferent state. Here the government and the administration are not active. If they were active the mysteries behind the August 17 bomb blasts would have been resolved. So, if Bangladesh wants to get back its past glory and establish itself as a moderate Muslim country, the government will have to play its durole. Arnob, DU

Crossword Puzzle

We would be highly obliged if you kindly arrange to print "Crossword Puzzle" every day. We pass our retired life solving these puzzles printed in your daily.

This will be particularly helpful for us in the month of Holy Ramadan. Md. Aftab Uddin, One-e-mail

Feminism

Being a student of English Literature, DU, I, along with my friends, am trying to take Feminism as a course this year. Most of the boys at the university seem to think that this is a course for the girls only. However, one of the main problems of the course is that almost no material is available. So the other day we went to the new market to try our luck whether we could find anything or not. We peeped into the exclusive bookstores and asked about writings on feminism.

But we could not find anything. Feminism does not have a place in the realm of knowledge in this society. Rifat Mahbub, Dhaka University

It's not Test cricket



Bangladesh cricket team lost another Test by an innings margin. They suffered innings defeat in eight out of the last ten matches. It's really embarrassing. The poor performance of the team spurred the critics. Time & again the foreign media demanded omission of Bangladesh and Zimbabwe from the Test arena. Even now Cricinfo is conducting a poll on the question "Should Zimbabwe and Bangladesh be playing Test cricket?"

They forced us to forget the success in ODI matches by their poor show in Test cricket. The success in NatWest series has gone into oblivion. It seems the batsmen don't know how to play Test cricket, they surely forget that Test cricket is played over five days. They don't want to spend much time at the crease!

When they see the red cherry is coming to them they become mad & want to send the ball to the fence. As a result, they fall like nine pins. I don't understand how a Test team could be bowled out in only 28 overs.

I'm sure there is an unhealthy competition between Bangladesh & Zimbabwe to determine the weakest team in the elite club. Just compare the Ban-SL & Ind-Zim series with the Ashes series, they looked so pale. There was no competition at all. We all knew the inevitable result before the first ball was bowled.

Solaiman Palash East Jurain, Dhaka

commentators made fun of the whole team which eventually tarnished the image of the country as a cricket playing nation. I wonder why the Cricket Board is investing so much money for the game which is bringing nothing but humiliation to the whole nation.

However, the blame must not be put on the players alone. The Board should concentrate more on finding out what is going wrong in the series of poor performances, instead of being busy in politics. It should take immediate measures for arranging longer version games in our domestic cricket. Fifty over matches in Corporate Cricket League and Dhaka League are not paying dividends. And also the Picnic League in the name of National Cricket League will not be very different from the 50 over matches since the matches in this event are not at all competitive.

Therefore, I think the following measures are very much necessary to save our cricket:

- Arrange three/four days match
- Make the matches competitive.
- Employ specialised bowling, batting coaches
- Be impartial in selecting players for the national team
- Arrange necessary training courses for the psychological development of the players
- Implement the law of reward or punishment by increasing or reducing the fees in terms of the performance of the players.
- Above all, dedication and efficiency in the Board management are needed.
- Improve the quality of the local umpires.
- M. Haque Chowdhury Dept. of English Dhaka College

Enough is enough. This is the time to put Bangladesh out of Test cricket. The sooner the ICC takes the decision, the better. These cricketers are making mockery of Test cricket. Mamun Ahmed Troy, Michigan



Thought provoking

Your article on "Garbage a resource, not waste" (The Daily Star, 25 September 2005, National section) was illustrated by a photograph of two white-shirted male officials standing over two female manual workers crouched on the ground, "instructing" the women on how to sift bio-fertiliser.

Am I right to assume that the photograph, which is credited as "STAR", was staged at the request of the journalist responsible for the article, so that the shocking gender insensitivity of this photograph may be laid at his

doorstep? If not, and if the photograph should in any way represent the management structure of this Eco-park project, further questions might need to be asked of Mymensingh municipality as implementing agency, UNICEF/Bangladesh and the Departments of Public Health Engineering as the financing agencies and CARE, Bangladesh as the monitoring agency for this project. Petra Osinski One-mail

The performance of the Bangladesh cricket team during their recent tour of Sri Lanka was dismal in all respects. The most tragic part of the Test and one day matches was that the players, particularly the batsmen appeared to be desperate to commit suicide and Ashraf was the leader in showing the way. This demonstrated the players' lack of commitment and dedication to the team. Instead of learning from the past mistakes, they seemed to be more eager to repeat the mistakes. It was like "Comedy of Errors". As a result, during the matches, the