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People in general always murmur against the said peaceful, but turned out to be hostile hartal since long. The leading political parties did not bother to feel the public pulse or are unwilling to abandon the crude barbaric way to oust the

government.

Since politicians will not impose a ban on hartal, I suggest an opinion poll be held on it to get a clear verdict of the people.
AR Choudhry
Uttara Dhaka

In response to ‘Pele and Maradona’



There are some people who try to impose their personal thoughts on others, while everyone has the right to make his own choice. It's about the letter from Muhammad Bin Abdullah entitled 'Pele and Maradona' published on June 27.

Pele is obviously one of the greatest players of football history with outstanding records. But Maradona is surely in that chart too. He was not only a great player but also was a good captain who always led the team from the front. He carried his team to two successive World Cup finals alone with his magical left foot as there were no other players in Argentina capable to share that responsibility during that time. I do still remember the controversial penalty that made me cry for the unique hero in 1990 as

he deserved the Cup most. Mr Abdullah said that Maradona was a rough player. Probably he has forgotten how Maradona was tackled and fouled in the 1982 World Cup. He was the common target of two to three defenders all the time. But he could not be stopped. The goal against England in 1986 is considered as the best ever goal in World Cup history. He also had very bright and successful seasons for Napoli and Boca Junior.

It's right that many experts like Stefano more than Maradona, but there is a great difference between many and most. By considering club football only an all time great cannot be defined.

Tanin
On e-mail

Nominate candidate for UNSG

The Indian government has reportedly asked for our official support in favour of Mr. Shashi Tharoor, the Indian candidate for next UN Secretary General. It is noted that Bangladesh is in an advantageous position in many respects. As per tradition of the UN the candidates of developing and small countries got priority in the past. As an Asia country Bangladesh is more favoured than India in this particular case. We would like to request the government of Bangladesh to nominate their own candidate instead of supporting the Indian candidate. We have had many experts in our country who served the UN in high positions.

We urge the government to nominate our candidate for the position of UN Secretary General which will brighten our image internationally.

M Mamunur Rahman, On e-mail

Who are running the country?

After coming abroad for my higher studies, I'm observing the political situation of my dear country from outside. Earlier, I used to make the same observation from inside. The way my country is being run presently is beyond any definition. Terminologies like democracy/autocracy/oligarchy/monarchy/demagogue are totally futile to apply to our present political condition; rather a new terminology has to be invented that include all of these. I always like to be proud of my country, even after coming to Edmonton, I happily buy garments with the tag 'Made in Bangladesh'. But what I should say about a country that cannot treat its president properly! It sounds like advisors are more powerful than the democratically elected MPs/ministers.

Sometimes I cry to myself saying, "Would any rational being please replace these incompetent politicians?"
M. M. A. Sayeed Rushd, University of Alberta, Canada

PM's directive to the EC

The news carried by DS on June 29 regarding voter list is very significant. The Honourable Prime Minister asked the EC to prepare a flawless voter list, and also asked the EC not to accept anything unjust. This statement in parliament by the PM, in the backdrop of so much controversy on voter list, has deep ramification and consequences as we look at it.

The nation will have to wait and see how the Election Commission responds.

A Reader, on e-mail

Inoperative lifts

Two lifts/elevators out of four are inoperative since long in Jiban Bima Tower at 10 Dilkusha Commercial Area. Presently, the building gets due importance because three important departments of ministries are situated here. It is already two months, the authorities have failed to take the initiative to repair the same ignoring people's sufferings every day.

We have to face a long queue every time we use the lifts and it is becoming very annoying day by day.

Jiban Bima Tower is one of the oldest highrise buildings in Dilkusha/Motijheel area. This building is owned by the government body -Jiban Bima Corporation. At present, different departments of ministries like BOI, SEC, and Privatisation Board etc occupy most of the floors. Besides many international and private organisations are running their offices in the same building. The City Bank Limited is occupying five floors of the building, as it is their principal branch. So, it is one of the crowded buildings in this area.

There are four lifts/elevators to carry people to different floors in the building. These lifts are under regular maintenance through a local vendor. But, the model is obsolete and they are unable to provide spare parts and as a result the lifts are not operating smoothly.

I am working for an international company in the building and I have been suffering a lot from the beginning when we shifted our office to the building.

In view of the above, we would request the building authorities to

solve the problem immediately.
Zahir U. Hyder, On e-mail

Voter list controversy

At present, our political leaders and chamchas are very worried about CEC and his new voter list. Their argument-- so many fake voters have been included in that list. Our journalists have been investigating that matter accordingly.

It's sheer wastage of national resources. During the AL government's tenure, we took picture for voter ID card and they issued it. We collected the ID card from a designated place. Those voter ID cards were declared invalid when the caretaker government came to power. It is mentionable that so many errors were found in the card (spelling mistake, age mistake, designation mistake, address mistake) on those ID cards. At that time, the present ruling party boycotted those voter ID cards like the present opposition party.

We have a statistics department. What are they doing at the moment? They may play a big role in making a fair voter list. Listen, vote casing is not compulsory in our country. It is an optional duty but an important one.

Generally, our City Corporation issues birth and death certificate for city people through an inquiry. On

Jute goods

Everybody talks about diversifying exports from Bangladesh but seldom encourages small exporters by giving financial incentive to them. Several small diversified jute goods manufacturers export jute goods like jute tape, nursery bags, nursery pots, seed bags, vegetable bags, dyed jute fabrics, Jute mat, promotional bags, decorative fabrics, cotton bags, wine bags, shopping bags, beach bags etc. India has the monopoly market of these goods abroad and is earning a huge amount of foreign currency. Bangladeshi exporters entered this field recently and are facing stiff competition from India as they give 15% cash incentive to their exporters. These industries are just like garment industries. They do dying, printing, cutting sewing, packing etc and export. The majority of the workers are women. This incentive will help establish more such industries, generate more jobs and enhance foreign exchange earning



considerably.

I earnestly hope and pray that the Honourable Finance Minister and the Chairman NBR will consider this matter seriously to give 15% cash incentive to these small entrepreneurs.

ZAMajumder
Dhaka

the other hand, an officer of the statistics department issues birth and death certificate to village people. Those two institutions' combined effort may help to make a fair voter list. Our IT experts may play a role in data collection and co-ordination.

Let's come to the CEC. He may set a spokesman on behalf of him. That spokesman will give statements and answer the journalists' queries. Justice department and Election Commission are not the same thing. The CEC's statements are creating a lot of controversy. He should realise the problem himself.
Sumon Dutta, On email

Diplomats and FM

This has reference to Dr. Abdullah Dewan's article published recently in the opinion columns of your daily under the caption "Diplomats, Constitution and the Foreign Minister."

I have mixed feelings. Our Foreign Minister may have been rather "undiplomatic" (democracy today is nothing but muscle-flexing and a form of blackmailing of the weak by the strong). I find there is much truth and honesty of purpose in the deliberations made by the Foreign Minister. To my mind, he has tried to call "a spade a spade". The learned author should realise that if not of this magnitude there are issues which are not only worthy of discussion but can be hotly debated like the innumerable undemocratic practices in many of the developed countries of the

world, including the most powerful nation.

Has it ever occurred to the Professor that these high profiled diplomats in the process may have a different agenda of their own? I for one no longer have any faith in this group of diplomats representing various countries of Europe and the West. May I humbly ask if the Professor would help our Mission in the USA to organise a similar seminar in Washington to discuss the innumerable flaws in the democratic processes and other conflicting political issues prevailing in these countries? Frankly, the seminar could be held on any other day "except on a Tuesday." Trust begets trust. The countries of the West have embarked on a two-fold aggression against third world countries, the silent and the violent one to culturally morally and ethically invade our countries.

These developed nations of the world are out as "aggressive vendors of Democracy and Freedom patented by them". You talk of our constitution etc. I am sorry it is not up for either dissection or discussion by a group of wise men from the West. We have our own people to do that job. Besides, today Bangladesh is passing through a most trying time in its quest for Democracy. It will come out stronger democratically and otherwise without this self-styled "imposition" by the group of western diplomats of what they call, "support, suggestion and help".
Shamsher Chowdhury
On e-mail



Anika's right

My attention was drawn to the letter entitled "Anika's right to treatment in Canada" published on July 3, 2006.

Your front page is full of gory details of crimes and all such activities. Isn't this a worthy cause to write up a front page article?

Don't you think that this is a worthy cause to fight for?

I hope you will agree and publish a front page article on the issue.

Rubaiyat Kibria
The University of Sydney, Sydney

Plight of Palestinians

Some fellows with conscience in Britain did deplore the latest Israeli invasion of the Gaza Strip. But is there no other mother's son who could weep for the pitiable condition of our Palestinian brethren? The blowing up of bridges and Gaza's main electricity transformer by the Israeli army can only be described as illegal acts of collective punishment against the Palestinian people and exposes as hollow the Israeli claim of having withdrawn from

Gaza.

Israel has repeatedly shown that it has absolutely no regard for international law. "This disproportionate use of military force in one of the most densely populated areas in the world is recipe for another disaster in the making", said Dr. Muhammad Abdul Bari, Secretary-General of the Muslim Council of Britain.

I urge upon those who really care for civility and humanity and cry for human

rights (at least in the public) to take urgent steps to bring about a negotiated settlement to the current crisis involving Palestinian and Israeli prisoners. And remember that such efforts must include the release of the 400 women and children among the 9,800 Palestinians that have been detained by the Israeli occupation forces.

AF Rahman
On e-mail



Indo-Bangla relations

"Dhaka, Delhi must overcome narrow, parochial outlook", Dr. Kamal told the roundtable on Indo-Bangla relations as it appeared in The Daily Star on June 29, 06. "The key to strengthening Indo-Bangla cooperation is to replace the mistrust and fear by mutually shared common goal of a better life for all," he added. Now these thoughts need to be implemented to usher in the trust between these two neighbours. This is the million dollar question. But the ways to remove the mistrust and fear have neither been shown nor hinted at by him.

However, with the sincerity and willingness of leaders of the two countries, suspicion can be removed and steps can be taken for the benefit of people of both the countries.

To start with, India, being the largest neighbour, has to move with all Sincerity, not with statements but with the implementation of the existing

agreements to build confidence among the smaller countries. Of course, it is not expected that all the outstanding agreements would be implemented in one go as this is neither possible nor expected. But a good beginning would remove suspicion gradually and instil confidence in the minds of the people. Again, care should be taken not to allow new issues to crop up. I would like to highlight a few basic points.

Firstly, it is seen that in our country hardly there is any profession where we are not divided. There is no problem in having difference of opinion but there must be unanimity in case of national issues. Alas! We are in tota disarray. It is a fact that unanimity would add strength to negotiation.

This lack of unity is being exploited by the neighbours. However, to resolve the existing issues, the initiative has to come from India as it is

somehow or other obstructing the implementation of the agreements. The list is enormous but I would like to mention only a few and the resolution of these would pave the way for the implementation of others. First and foremost is the Indira-Mujib Accord of 1974 and this needs to be resolved as soon as possible as the people in the enclave are going through immense hardship.

Presently, the Bangladeshis in the enclave can move from morning till evening and that too with some restriction. But what happens in case of an emergency at night, the Bangladeshis are totally at loss and this may even cause loss of human life. Secondly, one has to ensure equitable sharing of water of the common rivers and refrain from any undertakings in the upper riparian areas of these rivers as these may affect the

flow of water. Last but not the least is elimination of the trade imbalance between these two neighbours. Of late, this has become very contentious as India on one pretext or the other creates various obstacles, namely, quality control issue, non-tariff and para-tariff issues, thereby restricting the entry of Bangladeshi goods into the Indian market. Though during the meetings of the business communities everything is agreed upon but once the trade starts then come the various bottlenecks. Recently, India has imposed restriction on export of a few consumer items even after opening of LC.

The killing of Bangladeshis by BSF is another issue that has to be resolved quickly.
Brig Gen A.H.M. Abdul Momen (Retd)
New DOHS, Mohakhali, Dhaka