

Execution of Saddam

I applaud The Daily Star for publishing Robert Frisk's article "A dictator created then destroyed by America" (December 31, 2006). Frisk correctly recognised that the question "... what about the other guilty men" is reverberating through the minds of the millions of the civilised men. Surely, they will get away with it. Just ask the American Indians or the Indians including the Bengalis. Of course, there are always the traitors to help their Masters. The jubilant scene out of Michigan's Shia Muslim community was disgusting.

Saddam was one of mankind's greatest burdens created by the Western Masters - an age-old practice. Now that there is nothing that can be used to justify his misbegotten adventure and the killing of hundreds of thousands of innocents, Iraq's current Master in Washington has decided to kill one more. The speed and the timing of this most uncivilised act of the human history surely demonstrated the demoniac character and sinister motives of the self-proclaimed Decider and his cohorts in Washington, London and Jerusalem.

Dr. Mohammed Shafiqul Islam
Folsom, California

Few will miss Saddam who was better than Stalin or Hitler only in

statistics. But he will be remembered for the trials he did not get the opportunity to face: chemical attack on Kurdish villages, or in the war with Iran.

No surprise. America supplied him ingredients of biological weapons. Britain gave biological weapon factory's machinery. Germany gave chemicals for making bombs. All these would have to be brought to evidence in a trial for his war crimes. So he had to go through the motion of facing a lesser charge, that of killing 148 Shiites in the town of Dujail in 1982, and was quickly disposed off. He took the evidences against his masters with him to the grave.

Ashish Ahsan
Baridhara DOHS, Dhaka

Bush Jr's Kangaroo Court verdict that hanged Saddam, the late former president of Iraq on the Eid-ul-Azha day & precisely at the time when the Muslim morning call for prayer was being sounded over Baghdad & rest of the Arab world, appears to be a clear & defying message to the whole of the Muslim world what the Crusaders can do to them as and when they wish. Watch out.

Ashley Cooper
Khulshi, Chittagong

At last the much-talked about leader of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, was executed by hanging on December 30, 2006. The death of Saddam may be something to celebrate for George Bush as he had a grudge against Saddam but the event has left a barrage of questions. It may be true that Saddam has been hanged through a trial but what is the basis of neutrality of the trial? The trial was conducted with the intention to hang Saddam. The former president was not given enough chance to represent himself. On many occasions he was shown the door at the trial. Saddam was denied legal assistance and his counsels were killed on a number of occasions.

It is true that everyone is equal before the law and in order to establish the rule of law this proposition has to be enforced. Therefore, if Saddam is guilty of massacre he should have been brought to book but that should have been through an unbiased trial. There are question marks over the procedures of the trial. Even the European Union (EU) did not accept the trial.

As expected, both the US and the UK have welcomed the execution but they themselves have



unveiled their real face. The US is maintaining a double standard. They are shouting for human rights but are the masters in violating human rights. On the incidents of crossfire by Rab the US is expressing its anxiousness terming them as extra judicial killing. How are they going to label the execution of Saddam through an unfair trial? They are also opposing the capital punishment but with

Saddam they were over enthusiastic about hanging the ousted leader! The motive of the US behind conquering Iraq was simply its oil and other natural sources. The allegations of weapons of mass destruction and Saddam's link with al-Qaeda have already been proven false.

The US in its mission to conquer the Middle East alongside Israel has advanced a bit through the

death of Saddam. It could be argued that post-Saddam Iraq would be more violence ridden and there would be more bloodshed. The only way to bring peace in Iraq is the withdrawal of US led coalition troops.

Therefore it is very much clear that Saddam Hussein has been murdered. The incident of his execution is also a lesson for the other leaders of the world. When Saddam

invaded Kuwait in 1990, did he imagine what was waiting for him after 16 years! We never know what may happen after 16 years from now. We may have to witness the same with the most powerful man in the world today -- Mr. Bush.

We have to wait and see how world leaders learn from Iraq.
Moinul Alam
Eskaton Garden Road,
Dhaka



Traffic jam

Traffic jam is one of the biggest problems in Dhaka city. True, we are short of resources to handle this situation. Still, we have to do something to keep things under control.

Small vehicles should be discouraged to run during peak hours. I know in some emergency cases people have to use small vehicles for which some special passes can be arranged.

The streets inside the Cantonment must be opened for public use during peak hours. There might be some security problems. But, the Cantonment authorities can consider providing some special stickers to some public buses which normally have to take a much longer route to reach their destinations.

More big buses and double deckers which are capable of carrying a lot of people should be introduced. People should be encouraged to travel by bus instead of cars.

Parking is a major problem in the city. The traffic authorities should address it immediately.

I cannot say these will solve all the traffic problems in the city, but the situation will certainly improve.

F. Mannan, Uttara 14, Dhaka 1230

Moral defeat for AL

Everyone who sought a level playing field for the Awami League in the coming elections must feel disgusted by its pact with the Khelafat Majlis. I am not a purist or an idealist completely out of touch with reality. Therefore, I accepted, albeit unhappily, the AL's entering into an understanding with the former dictator Ershad's Jatiya Party. However, the AL's pact with Khelafat Majlis makes me wonder if it's really worth the effort to fight for the AL's right to a level playing field - after all, the fatwas it guaranteed are sure to trample the rights of thousands of Bangladeshis--mainly the minorities, women and the disadvantaged. Your newspaper reports bear witness to this fact.

Moreover, as justice Rabbani pointed out in an op-ed column in the daily Prothom Alo, fatwas usurp the reserved and exclusive powers of the courts to provide legal dispensation. In agreeing to the right to issue fatwas by the clergy, in one single act the AL showed its willingness to further compromise the sanctity and effectiveness of a judicial system already weakened by abuses.

I suspect that the AL leadership has seriously offended a large segment of the electorate that would have liked it to win in the forthcoming elections. In my judgment, the momentum up until now was in their party's favour. But the deplorable pact with Khelafat Majlis will probably cost it that segment's sympathy and support. And even if the AL were to win in the vote count, to many of us it has already conceded a significant moral defeat.

H. Taufiq Choudhury
New York, NY 10268

Political agitation

I was shocked and surprised to read the letter on the above subject (published on 26 December 2006) written by Adeeba Aziz Khan. I just fail to understand as to how someone from the legal profession can have such perception of people's right to life and security and the right to free movement for making a living. How on earth could she put the right to choose a government over the right to life and free movement?

I feel that I really do not have any

choice in selecting the government as there is no basic difference between the two major political parties. Both are out to grab power and then use that power to plunder the resources of the country.

So, as a voter I feel like the fish given the choice of being fried in lard, butter or oil.

I therefore do not give a damn as to who is going to rule the country over the next five years as there will be no real change, irrespective of who comes to power. I therefore take serious exception to the killings, disruption to our normal day to day life and destruction of private and public property in the name of political movement.

I would request the political parties to let us live in peace and refrain from giving such anti-people political programmes.

Salahuddin Ayubi
One e-mail

New kings

Bangladesh has become a place for new kings. These kings are our politicians of some big parties who never care for the common people. Those who in the name of pro-liberation forces stab in the back the ideals of liberation war can be worse than the real anti-liberation forces, as we have problems in identifying them.

I would like to ask what issues or programmes our big parties have for the election other than going to power by any means?

Parvez Monon Ashraf
Dallas, Texas, USA

Bad signs

People of Bangladesh have no reason to feel relieved. Rather, they should start holding their breath and bite lips because of what Dr. Yunus said, This is the first time in our country's history that a caretaker government has created so many apparent loopholes in conducting a free and fair election and at the same time plunged itself into a number of controversies, that the hope for a peaceful outcome is in serious jeopardy. The way the Awami League and its alliances decided to go to the election (before backing out) at the eleventh hour without resolving some of their "legitimate issues"(seemingly they

did not have any other option besides this in order to go to power) and the way BNP and its alliances had expressed their doubts time to time on various decisions of caretaker government, especially on various transfer decisions for different high level government officials, are not a good sign--I mean for the post election scenario (even if it is held).

Rayan Zafar
California, USA

AL understanding with Khilafat

Thank you for your well thought out and well articulated commentary on the subject. We have the strong feeling that there might be some unknown reasons for the AL general secretary to sign the MoU going against the basic political ideology of the AL i.e. democracy and politics not based on religion. Mr. Jaiil shall never ever succeed in convincing the people by trying to explain the difference between a MoU and a pact. In political understanding they are the feathers of the same bird. I would urge the AL presidium members to explain to the people why it is not possible to scrap the dubious deal, rather than making futile attempts to defend it.

A reader
one e-mail

MP candidates

Unlike Eid or Durga Puja or Christmas the festival of 'Election' visits us only once in five years! Naturally, it generates tremendous enthusiasm, activity and excitement among the general people, and more so (plus greed) among the rent seeking usually corrupt, ill-educated (and what else) so-called politicians and infinite number of aspirants. Bangladesh will secure the first place in the world if aspirants for the offices of MP are counted! More than ten thousand persons consider themselves as worthy of becoming MP when the available number is only 300. Read the newspapers, watch TV and enjoy the fun. There are reports of hunger-strike, suicide attempt, hartal, vandalism, hooliganism and 'what not' for seeking the ticket.

No country has become so rich in such a short period of time in the

world as Bangladesh. This may sound strange to all. We should count the percentage or sheer number and also observe the life styles of a vast number of people. The cost of properties should also be taken into account. In a country of 147 million people one percent equals to 1.47 million.

A huge number of people are rich beyond their expectation.

Why such and such industrialist needs to compete for MP election? Was he not happy doing business? Why so many 'mastans' should file nomination papers?

We have a tendency of showing off power and wealth. The less educated, less cultured the person is, the more is the tendency of muscle flexing and showing off. Everybody wants to be called 'President' or 'Chairman' or 'Boss' or 'Sir'. After amassing an indecent amount of wealth in the shortest possible time as compared to the sub-continent standard 'they' crave for recognition and 'immortality'. Hence is the run for MP office.

However, a mechanism should be devised to control this ugly and unholy practice.

SN Mamoon
On e mail

Some suggestions

I am a Bengalee and my father was a doctor, martyred during the liberation war. Very recently, I left my beloved country which is now passing through a grave crisis. I would like to request the politicians to amend the constitution and ensure the following:

1. None can compete for MP when s/he attains the age of 65.
2. If anybody was sentenced to jail for a period for more than one year s/he will be disqualified for doing politics for the next 10 years.
3. The Election Commission, the judiciary, Public Service Commission, Anti corruption Bureau should be completely independent.
4. Submission of wealth statement of the applicant, his/her parents, spouse and parents-in-law including TIN number, if any, before getting any employment of the state should be mandatory.
5. After retirement, no government servant will be qualified for becoming MP. I personally think that after

that the politicisation of everything will be reduced since after retirement nobody will have the dream of becoming a corrupt minister.

A reader, Canada

AL and Islamic parties

Without going into any argument, one can say that the AL general secretary has committed a political blunder by signing a formal MoU with the Khelafat which includes a provision going against the basic policy of the AL--- secularism. Even the 19-point programme adopted by the 14-party alliance includes a provision to oppose politics based on religion. It is very difficult for an ordinary citizen like me to understand the rationale behind such a contact with an Islamic party. The damage has already been done. Sooner the so called MoU is scrapped, the better.

Before concluding , may I raise a question : were the AL policy makers aware of such a dubious deal to be signed by the general secretary?

A reader

on e-mail

Separation of judiciary

The judiciary has a special position in every civilised society.

The reason why the judiciary had achieved the decorum was due to its non biased role as well as fair treatment to all.

In 1999, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court (SC) in our country delivered a historical verdict which directed the government to separate the judiciary from the executive body. Nevertheless, the decision is yet to be implemented because of the negligence by two successive governments. And that's why we have failed to ensure social justice and unforeseen problems are cropping up in every sector.

MAH Nazim
Dept. of Political Science
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Closeup 1 contest

A little girl Salma, from a remote village of Kushtia, has won the victory crown. She sang well and congratulations to her. This process of finding out young talents who will bear the standard of our very own Bangla song is really commendable.

But what I can't but say is that, sms voting is not always perfect and it is hugely impacted by emotion.

Shoaib M. Siddiqui
University of Dhaka



The Nobel laureate

Criticism can be helpful to the person who is criticised. From an article written about Prof. Yunus, we have got some idea about different people and organisations around the globe (how much the information is correct is another story).

My personal feelings about Professor Muhammad Yunus: He has a very important role in introducing Bangladesh to the global societies.

Since 1996, I have visited many African countries where I have been asked lots of questions about Professor Yunus and Grameen Bank. It is because of him, a larger percentage of people in Africa, know Bangladesh. The concept of Grameen Bank is very much surprising to them. Many times I faced difficulties in answering them properly because 11 years ago I knew a little about Grameen Bank and Professor Yunus. Moreover, I am a scientist, I don't have a clear idea about the banking systems and business.

After my first visit to Tanzania, Kenya and Zanzibar, I had contacted and requested him to visit those countries because they wanted to see him. I have no hesitation to say that he has brought respect for the nation. We can today say confidently, "World, we have the ability to do whatever we like."

Prof. Lutfor Rahman, Dhaka