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Team without Pilot!

Bangladesh Cricket Board has recently announced the 15-member preliminary squad for the upcoming World Cup cricket to be held in the West Indies. Faruque Ahmed led selectors panel has already received good support from the cricket lovers of this country for their consistent unbiased selection of the national team. Merit is the only criteria for the inclusion of any player in the national team—that's what our chief selector has said time & again. Moreover he is also in favour of giving chance to the experienced players. He wants to make a team with young & experienced players to give it a proper balance.

Nobody has ever raised any serious question about his selection of team in recent times. Because we know he is doing his job sincerely.

But with due respect to our chief selector, I would like to say that it was really unfair to drop an experienced player like Khaled Mashud Pilot ahead of such an important tournament like the World Cup. I know that Pilot's recent form is against his inclusion of the team. However, I must say that no other guy is at present suitable to replace Pilot.

Pilot is a highly experienced cricketer & he is a genuine fighter. He can play crucial knocks at critical times, he has proved it before & can prove it again. So to drop a player of his stature ahead of the World Cup is unfortunate indeed.

So I would like to request the BCB to include Khaled Mashud Pilot to the squad so that he can say goodbye to cricket in a decent manner.

Nazmus Saquib, Bashabo, Dhaka

I try, in memory of Eddie, to keep abreast of the cricket played by the Bangladesh "Tigers", and was delighted that they had a series win in Zimbabwe. It is a good progression and I wish them good fortune in the World Cup. Many countries have been less than complimentary and say Bangladesh should not be in the Test arena at all. Is that so? I seem to remember they said the same about Sri Lanka and New Zealand and Bangladesh has not been around nearly as long as they were before they performed to any standard. All of the top sides have scores in Test and ODI they would prefer to forget and I don't hear anyone calling upon them to remove themselves from the scene. Eddie was convinced that Bangladesh would come right and was sure that time and most importantly, a stable, and efficient cricketing structure would bear fruit.

It was therefore surprised to read about the omission of Pilot (Khaled Mashud) from the World Cup squad. If he is injured and unable to play, then so be it. If as this newspaper suggests he was dropped because of dispute with the selectors, for the greater good of the country they should have swallowed their pride and picked him up. His record speaks for itself and to say that he is not as good a batsman as Mushfiqur is preposterous.

Cally Barlow, On e-mail

I applaud the selectors on taking the correct decision of dropping Khaled Mashud for the World Cup. I have read the reactions of the ex-players

Dr. Yunus

Bangladesh has been reborn with some good people steering the political vehicles for the last one month. At this juncture, it seems that nature is taking its own course to reverse all odds and evils that engulfed our socio-political spheres since independence. With all these, your intention to be in the driving seat with great responsibility appears to be auspicious for the poor, destitute, deprived, and distressed vast majority people of Bangladesh.

I personally appreciate your courage to be in politics at this point, because politics is the highest platform to serve society and mankind. Politics created Mahatma Gandhi, Mahathir in Asia. Surely you can have your place. However, politics being a different ball game, what you are doing now requires much sagacity. You must do a lot of homework before you step into the real field.

I feel you should talk to some veteran politicians and wise men to get a clear picture of the political arena. However, we will need to observe your agenda and proposed action line before proceeding further. But we do support your decision.

AKM Shahidullah
Natural Resources Institute
Manitoba, Canada

Truth of the matter

Just as one swallow does not make a summer, one honest politician out of twenty-five or fifty does not sanctify the practice of politics in Bangladesh. Flustered protestations of the political gasbags notwithstanding, Dr. Yunus simply stated an obvious statistical fact when asserting that politicians in Bangladesh are in it "to make money."

Readul Islam
Kalyanpur, Dhaka

Politicians fail

The caretaker government should take as much time to reform and establish new policies for the betterment of the people and the future of our country.

Our politicians have failed to establish true democratic institutions. They have wasted enough time. The politicians should stop shouting now, they have done enough agitation, corruption and division among people to grab power. They fight with each other and when power is not with them they unite. Right now in the same tune they are rushing to hold the so-called election even without voter ID, even though their demand a few days ago was introduction of voter ID. Now that their *mastans* who guard and protect their power are being caught they are demanding election.

All politicians are not dishonest, I agree, but they have failed to do their job.

Politicians, please keep quiet.
Ehsanul Karim
Palm Beach Gardens, FL, USA

Sajib Wajed

Sajib Wajed Joy has been chosen one of the top 25 young global leaders—it is inspiring news for the people of Bangladesh. To connect this achievement to the people and to overcome the follies recurrently committed by the political parties, he should do the following—

Acquire institutional education in global politics, economics and law. Acquire in-depth anthropological, ethnic, cultural and political knowledge on Bengalee nation. Finally, he should mobilise resources and energy nationally and globally to launch a purely humanitarian organisation free from any political motive, to work on one issue—poverty alleviation in Bangladesh.

Mani Islam
Toronto, Ontario

Excesses in the name of religion

What kind of Muslims are we? What kind of Islam are we observing?

A Christian business woman, Jennifer Chim Yee, who is a

British national went to Pakistan where a Pakistani businessman swindled her and when she went to get help from the law, guess what she got? She was physically searched by a policeman, and they even tore her dress something not allowed in Islam.

We should take a firm stand against all such activities.

Abeer Khan
Pakistan

Cutting short weekend?

Cutting short weekend? Or cutting short employees' overtime payments?

It is very disappointing to see how much self centered and commercial minded our country's top business are. Business communities like BGMEA and FBCCI have proposed for one weekly holiday, instead of two days. Is this aimed at avoiding over-time payments to the employees?

I work for a foreign multinational and I understand the impact of Friday weekend in Bangladesh very well, but I don't understand why FBCCI and BGMEA are asking for one day holiday? Capitalism is part of democracy, but not the other way around, so far I understand.

We, the general people, know very well what most of the country's big businessmen's lifestyle is like and why they are reluctant to enjoy quality time with their family members at home. We general people also have a fair idea as to how some of these businessmen started their entrepreneurship by smuggling, black marketing and looting property during and after the independence war.

I saw on TV a couple of weeks back a top businessman reciting from the Holy Quran's reference to holiday and Jumma prayers. Do our businessmen also follow other clauses of the Holy Quran regarding ethics? You feed us rotten food and medicine and now you are trying to take away our family time from us.

Wake up friends, enjoy the morning sun with your family and friends. Play squash with your daughter, swim with your son, and have faith in the Almighty. Have a decent life!

Biva Rahman
Banker, Banani, Dhaka

Save PSC

Corruption has been injected in all sectors of the government including education, health, and power. Due to corruption our GDP achieved 2% lower than the expectation as some distinguished economists pointed out.

Corruption in the job market is alarming. The meritorious are not getting adequate recognition in the job market. Accusations against the Public Service Commission (PSC) are getting louder day by day. Question leak-out has become a regular affair. And job seekers have to pay a hefty amount of money to get what they want.

So the government must immediately initiate an action plan to save the PSC.

Md. Ashraf Ali
Gulshan, Dhaka

Catch the patrons

The government should halt the execution of the pseudo-Islamic fundamentalists and instead invite the FBI to interrogate them to find out who are their backers.

If they are executed, then all possibilities of finding out their political godfathers will be lost. So the civil society should rally to stop their execution and instead propose to interrogate them to find out who have been their patrons.

And then the patrons should be punished. Else this scar of pseudo-Islamic terrorism will not be healed.

Irshad Alam
Berkeley, California

A lesson for Bangladesh

The United States is considered by many as the greatest democracy on earth. At first glance, it seems so. Yet, President George W.

Bush got elected by disenfranchising thousands of African-American voters in 2000 and in 2004 by using unverifiable paperless electronic voting machines. And now he is misusing his presidential powers by sacrificing American lives in a sectarian civil war in Iraq. This explains how democracy has been hijacked by self-seeking politicians and their neo-conservative advisers.

Pulitzer Prize winner Chris Hedges, a former New York Times reporter, in his book "American Fascism: The Christian Right and the War on America" argues that a home-grown fascism in the United States is destroying the very essence of democracy in America. Hedges' book paints an alarming picture of a country in despair, its people deprived of political and economic power to make democracy work.

As America prepares for a new presidential election, with declining numbers of people trusting the political system, Mr. Hedges says it is time for a painful reassessment of the ills at the heart of a country that is losing his hold on democracy and falling prey to the dangerous forces of atavistic religious fundamentalism on the social side and neo-conservative corporatism on the economic side. America's religious right, he contends, is a movement with many common elements of classical fascism: rampant nationalism, militarism, contempt for the poor and disdain for intellectual freedom. And all this against a backdrop of pervasive corporate power.

"The reason we are fighting this movement in the U.S. is because we live in a country where top 1 per cent control more than the bottom 90 per cent combined," Hedges said. As the war in Iraq shreds whatever credibility the Bush administration had after 9/11, massive sums are allocated to the military while ordinary taxpayers struggle for a living wage and the administration touts the "spread of democracy" abroad while eroding civil liberties at home, many Americans believe democracy has become a hollow word in America. "It is so expensive to run a presidential campaign that unless you are funded by corporate America you can forget it," he says.

And Hedges is not alone in pointing out how this has spread in America during the Bush presidency. Some liberal critics of the Bush administration argue that the growing militarisation of America is sowing the seeds of fascism, undermining the basic tenets of democracy.

As Bangladesh faces a crisis in holding free and fair election, it should learn from the voting frauds and hijacking of democracy by small powerful groups. Elections in America have become a joke because of voting frauds by partisan election officials and their corporate allies. As Robert F. Kennedy Jr. wrote in The Rolling Stone magazine last year: "American history is littered with vote fraud—but rather than learning from our shameful past and cleaning up the system, we have allowed the problem to grow even worse. If the past two elections have taught us anything, it is this: The single greatest threat to our democracy is the insecurity of our voting system. If people lose faith that our votes are not accurately and faithfully recorded, they will abandon the ballot box." This applies to Bangladesh as well.

Mahmood Elahi
Ottawa, Canada

A great relief

I would like to say that the country was on the verge of ruin and was heading towards darkness. In a hazardous situation it was being dominated by tyrant politicians (blood suckers). And finally came the rescuers. The immediate rescue operation has been done by the caretaker government and the rest will be done by Professor Yunus if and when he takes charge of the situation.

Razib Khan
AIUB, Dhaka

Motorcyclists in trouble

The countrywide drive by the law enforcers under the coverage of



COURTESY: TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL BANGLADESH

Time for soul searching

It's time for deep soul searching. Recently, we became very critical against crime and corruption in our country. Happily, we have reacted favorably to the current caretaker government's action against corrupt politicians and businessmen.

In this respect, the fact remains that if such an action is taken or started, it is not an end in itself or an eyewash but means to an end. The general feeling is that none is above the law. The offenders, whoever they are, must be dealt with duly if proved guilty.

Also, the anti-corruption drive has been confined largely to politicians, save only a few businessmen so far, for alleged corruption. But people feel that other corrupt elements must also be brought to justice.

The common men are fed up with the politics of dishonesty and hypocrisy and confrontation between the party in power and the opposition. They are looking forward to some way out.

Engr. Shaheedul Islam
On e-mail

Valuable minerals

I refer to a news item captioned 'Ex-energy adviser's hasty deals' published in the front page of The Daily Star on January 25, 2007.

In this connection it may be mentioned here that I found vast deposits of beach sand minerals Zircon, iron ore, rutile, garnet, monazite, magnetite etc. in Cox's Bazar in 1970 which I call "black gold". Since then I have left no stone unturned for the commercial use and export of the valuable minerals either in the public sector or in the private sector. In this regard many reports, articles, comments and letters have been published in our various national dailies and weeklies but all in vain.

In 1975, the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission declared that they discovered heavy minerals and set up a pilot project with the help of the Australian government.

But so far the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resource, the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission and the Prime Minister's Secretariat have not taken any pragmatic and positive steps for the commercial utilisation of the valuable minerals.

The local authorities should allow 6 months' time to complete all the formalities with BRTA from the date of purchase of motorcycle.

BRTA may authorise local dealers to issue motorcycle registration number to the buyers on their behalf.

The ownership (BRTA documents) of the motorcycle may be given to the purchasers once the dues are fully cleared.

Major Muhammad Asadullah
(Retd)
Satkhira

It is true that mining, separation, refining & purification of the minerals is a highly technical matter that involves colossal capital investment for setting up industries and factories which a poor country like ours can hardly afford. But we may collect the minerals and export these in crude form and earn foreign exchange. Thus we may move step by step and utilise our national mineral/wealth for the greatest benefit and welfare of our people.

Would the chief adviser of the caretaker government kindly look into the matter in the greater economic interest of our people?

OH. Kabir
Hare Street, Wari, Dhaka

Attack on Iran?

Reports indicating possible Israeli attack on the nuclear installations in Iran by using "mini nukes" look threatening to Iran. Such provocative reports at the behest of the Bush administration are meant only to provoke Tehran to go for the first hit tactic inviting retaliation. The US and Israel should be well aware of the preparations being made by government of President Ahmedinejad to face any eventuality arising out of unexpected attacks either from the US or from Israel sponsored by the US. Any misadventure on Iran, therefore, could only be disastrous.

trous for both Israel and the US, initial possible destruction and genocide in Iran notwithstanding. But that would put an end to the current US strategy of launching catastrophic pre-emptive wars in the Middle East and lead to real disarmament, including nuclear. Iran today is much better equipped than, say, ten years ago when it was shattered by a long war with Iraq aided by the US weapons.

Dr. Abdul Ruff Colachal
JNU, New Delhi

