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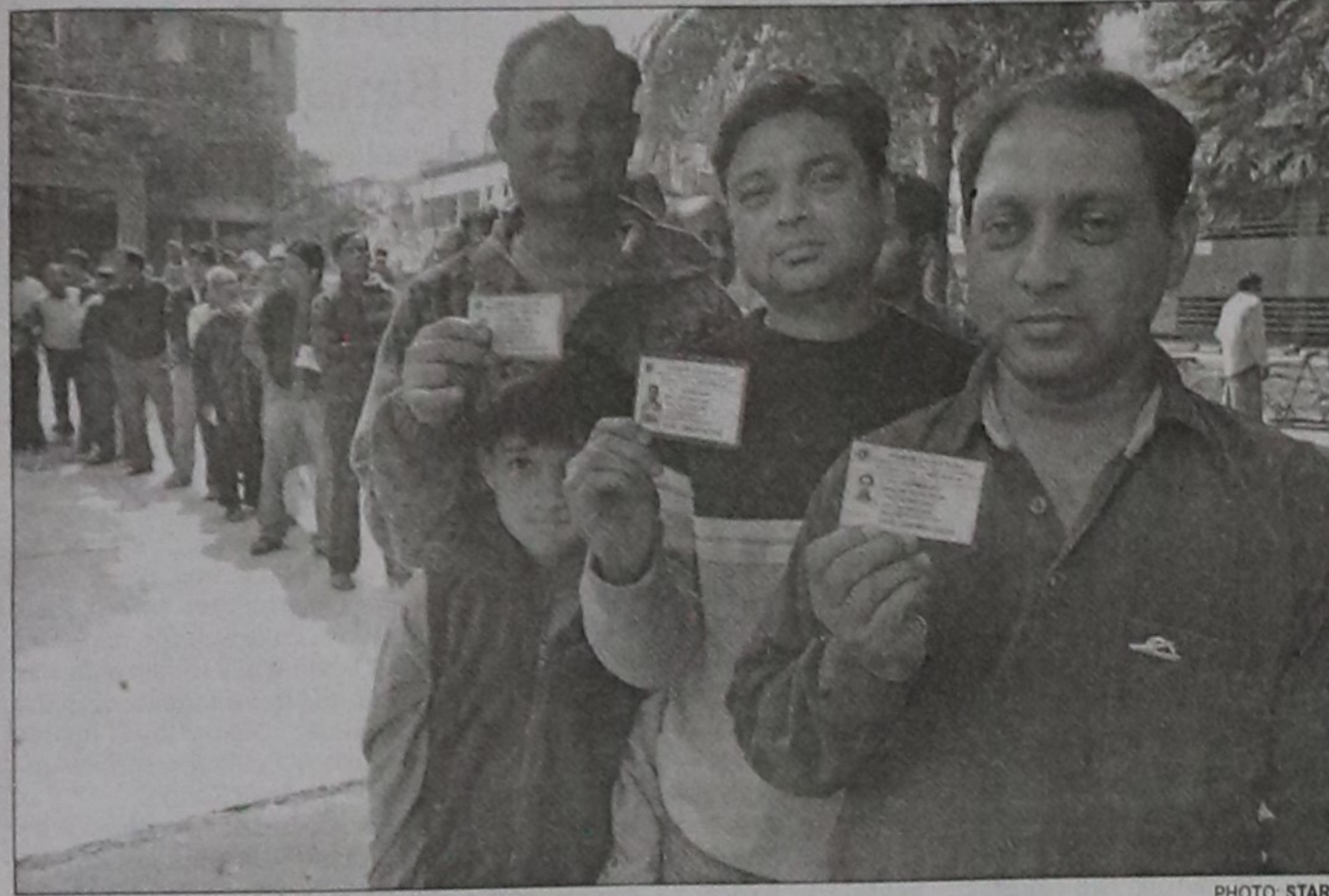


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National ID

We have received our National ID Card, thanks to the efforts of the civil and defence personnel. I could not follow if anybody has, through this page, brought to the notice of the relevant authorities that the ID card ought to have the permanent address too of the holder-citizens of Bangladesh. As is given to understand the card would be of use, besides its use for casting vote, but I don't feel that the present address is enough for other usages. Being a holder of the card without my permanent address, could I cast my vote in my village, if such necessity arises? In cities and towns it is a common phenomenon for the majority, being tenants, to have to move from one area to another and obviously their addresses change; maybe I will be shifting to some other place next month. One may also have to go to other districts on transfer. Although the holder's photo is there, he cannot have his address changed on the card, though that

might not be required, but permanent address with village, police station and district given on the card would make one's identity as citizen of Bangladesh more explicit and acceptable. Those living in the village will have their permanent address as present address, and those who have their own house in cities/dwellers, it would be wise to include the permanent address of the holder.

One point is relevant to cite here. As there was a reported news item, the Biharis, domiciled citizens of erstwhile Pakistan (who still crave for Pakistan and will die for Pakistan), are taking recourse to fake permanent address and making them voters and receiving NID card, of course, with present address like ours. Then there remains no difference between the domiciled citizens and me.

Sujon Raihan
Dhaka

Are we learning anything?

Like the whole world Bangladeshis are also curious about the US presidential campaign. Do our politicians feel that they have many things to learn from it? We have seen how Hillary Clinton admitted defeat and supported Obama. Had it been our politicians they would have started blaming each other and allege rigging! In fact, this is the main reform we are looking forward to following 1/11. This reform could only be brought through self-realisation. It is not possible to effect it by dint of any formula! As far as some recent comments of some of our politicians are concerned, it sounds unlikely that they have that realisation. The people of the country are also afraid as to whether the country is going back to pre-1/11 days.

Moinul Alam
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Rickshaw-free capital

I would like to take this opportunity to thank The Daily Star for its recent editorial on the need for gradual removal of rickshaws from our city streets.

In spite of all the publicity for leaving rickshaws alone to their own devices, it is a matter of urgency that we realize immediately the need for a rickshaw-free capital city of Dhaka. Precious time is passing by while we contemplate and argue over who is right. The fact is this extremely slow moving

vehicle is simply not an option any longer when we are sitting in the year 2008 and when we are constantly competing against the rest of the world which is fast moving ahead. We need to understand that it is best for all if we think forward and bring ourselves out of the old days and think fresh and new.

Other forms of transport must be considered to replace rickshaws in Dhaka. It is time that we pay proper attention to the fact that we lose highly valuable time sitting idle behind a pool of rickshaws helplessly and wonder what we have done to deserve this. The reality is we have done nothing yet to expect anything better.

I am truly touched by the pain and suffering of rickshaw pullers as they spend days and nights pulling what we come rain or extreme heat. We as educated citizens must try sincerely to come up with ways to ease their pain and work towards creation of alternative forms of earning. At the same time we must save hundreds of hours lost every day by each one of us waiting in unexplainable and unacceptable traffic jams while the police try to control the ever-free rickshaws.

Let us all come to our senses and to the agreement that we must take immediate and stern steps to first control and in quick phases eliminate rickshaws from our capital city streets. Of course, further steps have to be taken to do the same for the rest of the country through long term plans.

Rahat
Malibag, Dhaka

Sheikh Hasina's release



With the departure of Sheikh Hasina from Bangladesh we hope to see many positive changes in the political arena of Bangladesh. It will be a political and moral gain. She can continue to play the role of guide and philosopher. The Awami League will be able to take part in the dialogue and pave the way for election and subsequently installation of a government led by the pro-liberation forces in our country. The BNP, a 'khichuri' party, is in a shambles. Its evil ally Jamaat is under pressure due to the arrest of Matiur Rahman Nizami and possible arrest of a few more rehabilitated war criminals.

So we envision a win-win situation for the pro-liberation political parties, the people and the country.

SN Mamoon
One-mail

Muslim Inheritance Law

Recently, a lot of misunderstandings and controversies or even unnecessary violence have been reported in almost all dailies over this contentious issue. Here I would like to place before the readers my understanding of the law and the probable reasons behind this based on the little knowledge I have acquired on the subject over the last half a century. May be my understanding is not perfect; nevertheless, it is presented for what it is worth. May be it may help in clarifying the matter to some extent and cool down tempers.

Islam, which was the champion of upholding women's rights, believes that male children represent and head the family or clan, as the case may be.

They are to be totally responsible for their elderly and inactive parents and other elderly dependents. This has been prescribed as their compulsory duty. Female children on the other hand are to be married off and they become the part of their in-law's family or clan. They are not responsible for the well-being and upkeep of their parents and others in any way. If they do it, it is totally voluntary. Their rights and responsibilities are with their husband and his family.

Logically, therefore, women inherit half the share of the men from their parents' properties and assets. The half share given to the female child is to recognise and ensure her financial independence and self-esteem in her in-law's family. She can keep, spend or dispose off, as she wishes without any obligation to anyone!

On this basis, Islamic inheritance law is very fair to women. It ensures that no woman becomes financially helpless; if her parents had wealth. All these rules are naturally based on normal life in society, and the marriage of adults as the accepted way of life. Islam does not encourage spinster-hood or life long bachelor-hood, which in any case is not a normal trend in life! I believe that this normal and logical trend is the basis behind the rational rules of Muslim Inheritance Laws!

S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Food summit synopsis

Earlier, FAO summits were only of academic interest. This year, it has assumed added significance in the wake of massive food price hikes around the world. Some countries even witnessed so-called 'food riots'.

The food crisis has been one of the main topics at the FAO Summit, with millions of poor people around the world facing starvation. Food security has been a prime topic. The poorest sections have to be protected from the vagaries of food price hikes. A recent Saarc (South Asian) initiative would be an ideal answer - a Saarc Food Bank. Each region in the world should have at least one food bank.

Another major topic has been the impact of climate change on agriculture. Here in Bangladesh, we have noticed slight changes in rainfall patterns and seasons, which can have devastating effects on our agriculture.

The recent rains and consequent floods inundated hundreds of acres of paddy lands. Likewise, prolonged droughts can also destroy crops, especially those heavily dependent on water such as paddy. A temperature rise will also cause damage to crops.

The use of food sources for biofuel production is another controversial issue. After all, the food grains used for fuel production can feed millions of hungry

people in, say, Africa. It is true that we must find alternatives to petroleum, but depriving the world of a food source to do so may not be a practical solution.

It is clear that rich nations have to do more to end hunger.

A recent newspaper report revealed that Japan's 'rice mountains' which can be exported to countries experiencing a rice shortage. Several Western countries have doubled food aid but regional groupings in the West can and should do more to alleviate hunger in less privileged parts of the world.

Mohammad Shahidul Islam
Tourism worker
One-mail

Hillary Clinton's speech

History is made in one way or the other. Senator Clinton has spoken to her supporters and admirers in the historic National Building Museum, Washington DC. She has suspended her campaign, and has generously extended her full support for the likely nominee of the Democratic Party, Senator Obama, for the presidency of America. This was a very delicate political speech. She was very clear in her vision of a future America. The most significant part of her speech was endless references and stories of the American women of all ages struggling for preservation of family values and promotion of individual position in society. They are the ones who have extended their full and unequivocal support to her campaign for the Democratic nomination. She has further strengthened the foundation of women's rights, and has strongly advocated for equal rights, equal pay and equal opportunities for women. She has demonstrated that nothing is impossible for an American woman to look for in her career plan.

We all share our sorrow and admiration for her, and sincerely hope that she would continue to play a very important role for a Democratic Presidency in Nov. this year. She would also get full opportunity to make available her rich political experience and vision in the future Democratic government, favourite to win the next election.

In my judgment, she has delivered one of her best speeches during the last 16 months of her public speeches. She was generous, articulate, holding her emotion back and extending support to Senator Obama to be elected as President of the United States of America. Her speech has laid down the foundation for the victory of Senator Obama who has almost identical vision of a peaceful and prosperous America.

I hope the people of Bangladesh, especially the politicians, had the opportunity to watch her on television, and read her speech in newspapers. She had a message for us - how to be a great political leader, and put the country and the people first.

Areader
One-mail

Attain maturity

A nation preserves history. But we Bangladeshis are highly emotional. To others in the sub-continent we are known as "HUZZAT- E-BANGAL", that is, we go by whims and cheap slogans and rumours based on sentiments and emotions.

Our coming generations have a right to know our history. Else, they will remain ignorant and it may affect their attitude and mindset towards their origin and sense of belonging. We should retain our history to reminisce our historical backgrounds and build better roads and monuments than those retitled ones and name those

EURO 2008

The UEFA European Football Championship, or EURO, is scheduled to start on 07/06/08, which is widely known as the second biggest international football competition after the FIFA World Cup. This year's tournament will be held jointly in Austria and Switzerland - not two of the most recognised football nations in European or world football.

Euro 2008 will, however, be without one of the most popular countries of all - England. England failed to qualify for the Euros, which resulted in the sacking of manager Steve McClaren, and led to a serious debate about grassroots football and the increasing number of foreign players in the Barclays Premiership (English Premier League) in the country. This is a huge disappointment for a country which has some of the best football stars in world football. The likes of David Beckham, Frank Lampard, Wayne Rooney and Michael Owen will not be featuring this year and the tournament will, undoubtedly, suffer.

In every big international competition Italy, Germany and France are the favourites - and rightly so. These three nations are the most successful European nations in recent history, with Italy being the current World Cup Champions. The Euros last time around was,

however, won by little-known Greece after a terrific defensive display by the Otto Rehhagel-led Mediterranean nation. My favourites for this year's competition are the ever-improving Portugal. Portugal were Runners-Up in Euro 2004, when they hosted the tournament, and were Semi Finalists in the World Cup 2006 in Germany. They have one of the best managers in international football in Brazilian Luiz Philippe Scolari, also known as "Big Phil", who managed his native South American nation to World Cup glory in 2002. Portugal also have one of the most balanced squads in the tournament - a solid defensive pairing of Chelsea-based Ricardo Carvalho and Real Madrid-based Pepe and in Cristiano Ronaldo they have one of the most exciting, and controversial, attacking footballers in the world. Ronaldo is the clear favourite to be crowned the World and European Player of the Year after his goal-scoring displays helped his club Manchester United do the double and win the UEFA Champions League and the English Premier League this year.

Aranya Syed
London, England



PHOTO: AFP

as per our desires, but we must not try to alter the course of history.

Now in reality what do we witness? We find people taking pride in being able to speak in Urdu/Hindi etc. Urdu/Hindi songs are being played through loud speakers right and left here and there in public places even in the remotest part of the country. We as a nation suffer from complex. However, one must know that Urdu, a combination of Persian, Hindi and Arabic language was coined by the Mughuls. It's a very rich language in its original form, usually spoken by the Muslims almost all over India.

So, please do not distort history on whims and cheap emotions. We must respect our past and everything else in its proper perspective. I suggest we should restore the previous and original titles. We are so fortunate, that today we are the masters of our own lot by the grace of Allah. We must rise above all such meanness, petty ideas and prove to be a mature nation.

A.B. Muhammed Zakaria
Stanwell, Staines
Middlesex, TW19 7EY

Fate of people

Since the independence struggle and the birth of this nation, all govts. have had a 'detached' and seemingly insincere relationship with the fate of the people.

It all appeared so casual to govern this new nation of mostly illiterate populace that the 'rulers'

and again played foul and the responsibility/mandate that had been given to them was severely mis-matched and misused!

To add to this, the two lady prime ministers, without any training, commitment and experience with the statecraft and governance were at the helm of affairs. They were 'assisted' by their paid henchmen! So, the nation's fate had been intertwined with their activities!

And what those activities were, in most cases, are now very well known to people at home and abroad.

1/11 had been the harsh reminder of how we BEHAVE! Promulgation of the mildest form of Emergency was the only 'saviour' at that moment of truth for the nation.

That the people of Bangladesh can easily forget those BLACK days of pre-1/11 is possible only because they are mostly uncomfortable ever since. They are willing to take recourse to the same behaviour and culture. What parliamentary democracy are they, championed by the AL & the BNP in particular, trying to establish?

Who is shedding the "crocodile's tears" when we are still suffering from poverty, ill health, BAD governance and poor business management? Poorest education system?

What have the two leading women done for the EDUCATION of the masses? Do the people want

them again for a REPLAY of sorts of their 'destructive' behaviour?

If they have not been able to tame their hired 'supporters' for years, they cannot do so now. Because it has become the culture and the norm. They do not know any other decent or sane means.

In short, we must bring ourselves out of the shackles of the past and look forward. We do have dedicated, educated and experienced politicians, who should be given a chance to LEAD the nation. Because times have changed for Bangladesh and the world at large. It should be a NEW Journey for Bangladesh.

So, please allow the two willing hearts to RUST in Peace, and allow the Nation instead to SHINE.

We can collectively, and with some introspection, do much better without them. Many may not like this 'crude' truth, but yes we can. I appeal to the right thinking, independent minded, progressive thinkers to re-evaluate their (the Two) misdeeds and GIVE THE NATION A CHANCE TO COME UP!

We have to have the courage to admit and come clean. Because this is the time, NOW OR NEVER! It is only in the interest of gaining political mileage that their presence is being seen as a prerequisite. It is all crying wolf! They betrayed the nation and should be out of the scene.

Syed Imtiaz Ali
Banani, Dhaka

National Agriculture Policy

On June 03 last, the Technical Working Group (TWG) for the formulation of the National Agriculture Policy (NAP) had its 19th meeting held in the Ministry of Agriculture under the chairmanship of the Convener of the TWG. The meeting thoroughly reviewed the draft NAP prepared by the TWG and incorporated into it the various points suggested by different agricultural and related organisations. All the TWG members took active part in the review and refining of the draft policy. It is encouraging that the Convener of TWG has been taking keen interest in finally bringing out the most cherished National Agriculture Policy. The new agriculture policy which contains guideline for running our agricultural activities as per the demand of the time will, I am sure, make a mark towards bringing a significant development in the field of our agriculture. Now the Ministry of Agriculture will organise a workshop at Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) for giving a final touch to the draft NAP. We are hopeful that the government will adopt this new agriculture policy soon.

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