

Staying of DCC polls

Onus was on the govt to take timely preparation

WE are sad to note that the election to the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has been stayed for three months following a High Court order. This is to enable delimitation of constituencies of the bifurcated DCC and update the voters' list.

We recall that no election to the DCC could be held since 2007 when the term for the previous mayor expired during the time of the last caretaker government. But after the present government assumed office in 2009, it could not hold the mayoral polls for DCC on time, for reasons best known to it.

Clearly, the government dragged its feet on demarcating the wards for DCC (North) and DCC (South) and announcing their names, in pursuance of the Local Government (City Corporations) Act, 2009, which complicated matters for the Election Commission (EC).

The EC for its part should have updated the voter roll for the DCC polls before announcing the schedule.

What comes through it all is the government's nonchalant attitude reflecting a lack of required political will to hold the DCC elections.

The government is trying to explain away its inaction on the ground that the DCC is a single entity, despite its bifurcation through an executive fiat in November last year. Does it stand to reason?

How expeditiously the government and the EC comply with the requirements of the HC order would be a measure of the seriousness they accord to their constitutional obligations.

They should therefore waste no time in taking all necessary steps to delimit the city corporation wards under the new dispensation of two DCCs. Simultaneously, EC should take up the work to update the existing voters' list to hold the polls within the stipulated time.

Confusion over Padma bridge financing

Best bet still with World Bank

AMID much hype, much of it without taking into account the steep terms and conditions that would inevitably come with private venture funding should Bangladesh opt for a Malaysian solution, the question of who will ultimately fund the biggest infrastructure project of the present government remains elusive as ever. Indeed the matter loomed large in a recent cabinet meeting where the bulk of policymakers, it seems, were hooting for financing from Malaysia. Dissenting voices, albeit few in number included the finance minister who has come out in favour of working out differences with the World Bank (WB).

Given the fact that the project in question involves nearly \$3 billion in financing, the major question is whether or not the country will be in a position to go for an agreement with Malaysia that will undoubtedly call for a long-term lease on the completed bridge for cost recovery and profit making. Secondly, whether going for this option will benefit connectivity if toll charges are fixed at a rate that will be so high that the carry over effect will drive up costs of goods using the bridge will ultimately make it uneconomical to use it in the first place.

Though there have been some hiccups experienced in relations between the government and WB over alleged case of graft, the situation is not beyond salvation. It should be noted that there are several advantages to take WB financing where the interest rate would be a mere 1% and payment of instalments would only commence 10 years after completion of construction. These are terms that are agreeable to a developing nation like Bangladesh. As time is of the essence, it is imperative that measures be taken at policy level to get the ball in the right direction for a project of this magnitude will take years and not months to build, and once completed, will go a long way in facilitating trade and commerce links

'London 2012 Olympics: 100 Days to Go'

DAVID CAMERON

IN just 100 days time, the 2012 Olympics will open in London -- a spectacular start to the greatest show on earth. We want to share these fantastic Olympic and Paralympic Games with the people of Bangladesh and that's why my message to you today is this: "Welcome."

These games -- and this summer -- will be a proud moment for Britain. We will not only be staging what we're determined will be the best Olympics ever, but also celebrating the 60-year reign of Her Majesty the Queen -- the second longest-serving monarch on the planet. It's a very special time for our country and we want to share it with the people of Bangladesh.

I know Britain will be looking its best. We've built brilliant new venues -- on time and within budget. We've got our city ready, our transport systems in place, and we are looking forward to welcoming the world.

What will London 2012 offer? My view is that these games are about two things. Yes, sport will be at the heart of this great competition. We will see world records broken, memories created and new friendships begun during the games themselves. But when the events are over and the medals handed out, I am determined that these Olympics will go on changing lives for the better.

This legacy is vital. When we won our bid, Jacques Rogge, the President of the International Olympic Committee, talked about the "distinctive magic" that the UK will breathe into the 2012 Games -- and we've been making sure it happens.

As the only city to be awarded the Olympics three times, we'll be holding the games in a great tradition.

In 1908, the modern Olympics came of age in London -- the city where Olympic athletes paraded under their

national flags for the first time. The route of the marathon -- 26 miles, 385 yards -- was set so that the race would start at Windsor Castle and finish in front of the stadium's Royal Box, and that is the distance that has been used worldwide ever since.

Then, in 1948, the Games took place in the shadow of a devastating world war. Yet London succeeded in bringing countries together to celebrate the Olympic ideals of friendship and international community. More than that, they created new opportunities for women in sport, pioneered the Olympic volunteering movement, and laid the foundations for the modern

We've led the way with new methods of design and construction, using low-carbon technologies to make London 2012 the first truly sustainable Games.

And by investing in new sporting facilities and establishing a new "School Games" competition in schools all around the country, we're inspiring new generations of young people to experience the joys and benefits of sport.

But the legacy of London 2012 is not limited to Britain. The International Inspiration programme is creating opportunities for more than 12 million people in 20 coun-



David Cameron

not just the UK, can share in the inspiration of 2012.

So I want these games to be about more than just welcoming athletes to London for a single summer. We want to build new and lasting links between Bangladesh and Britain. If you are a student or academic, this is a chance to find out more about a country which has four of the top ten universities in the world, and more than 75 Nobel prizes for science and technology alone.

If you are an entrepreneur or investor, London 2012 is a chance to discover new opportunities in a country which has the fewest barriers to entrepreneurship in the world.

And if you are a tourist or visitor, it is a chance to experience Britain's unique blend of the old and the new -- the history and heritage of our castles, landscapes and royal houses alongside the cutting-edge culture of our music and art, our theatre and fashion.

Great sport. Great business. Great culture.

Hosting the London 2012 Games is a tremendous honour. We want to make it a great moment for Britain, and we are looking forward to welcoming the world to be part of it.

The writer is the British Prime Minister.



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Paralympic Games.

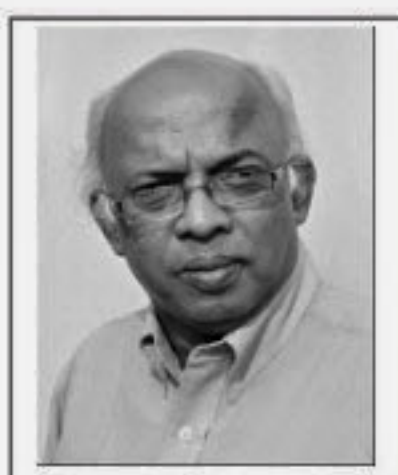
And this summer, when athletes and visitors arrive, they'll find a whole new quarter of London around the Olympic Park, in the east of the city. It's been a powerhouse of regeneration, and when the games are over it will be the site of new homes, business and jobs.

tries around the world.

Not only is it allowing more young people to enjoy sport today, but it is also helping to change the way these countries promote sport in schools and across society for the long term. It's a great example of how determined we are to ensure that every nation, and

GROUND REALITIES

Of men, politics and public memory ...



SYED BADRUL AHSAN

MOUUD AHMED is not satisfied with Suranjit Sengupta's resignation from the government. If he had his way,

he would have the entire government led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina leave office for reasons of corruption and bad administration. Now that is an interesting point Moudud Ahmed raises. And it becomes all the more interesting because it is Moudud Ahmed who makes it. He began his career as part of the defence team for Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the Agartala Case in the late 1960s. Then came the great falling-out after the liberation of Bangladesh between the government and Moudud Ahmed.

Moudud Ahmed found a clear niche for himself during the times of Bangladesh's first military ruler Ziaur Rahman, a favour he enjoyed till some time after the ouster of President Sattar's government in March 1982. In 1983, when Khaleda Zia took charge of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party as its chairperson, Moudud was seemingly aligned with her. He was even, at one point, injured in a road accident along with Begum Zia. And then came a time when he was hauled away to prison by the military regime of General Hussein Muhammad Ershad, only to emerge free and join the government of the nation's second military ruler.

It was under Ershad that Moudud Ahmed rose to the heights, in that real sense of the term. He was deputy prime minister and then prime minister and finally vice president. That last position he held on to right till the end of the Ershad dispensation in

December 1990, when he had to make way for Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, who was sworn in as vice president and then acting president of the country, tasked with holding general elections at the head of a caretaker administration.

One would have thought Moudud Ahmed would stay loyal to General Ershad after the latter's fall. It is a curious fact of national history, when you reflect on it, that many of the men and women whom Ershad raised to promi-

single-handedly organised the June 7, 1966, general strike in East Pakistan in favour of the Six Points programme. Following the serial tragedies of August-November 1975, Mizan Chowdhury held the Awami League together in a time that was as traumatic for the party as it was uncertain for the country. In the Ershad era, he joined the Jatiyo Party and ended up being prime minister. In his final years, he returned to the Awami League. That did not help him any. Every return by a

should have done long ago.

There ought to have been quite a few others in the last government led by Khaleda Zia who should have resigned in the larger interest of the country. That they did not, or would not, remain instances of acute embarrassment for all of us. Col. Akbar Hossain, on whose watch a scandal erupted over Danish aid to the country, did not resign nor did the prime minister ask him to vacate office.

Lutfuzzaman Babar should have walked away from power when those grenades took the lives of twenty-two citizens at an Awami League rally in 2004. He and Motiur Rahman Nizami should have left or should have been sacked by their prime minister when the ten-truckload of arms scandal was exposed before the nation. The chief whip, Khondokar Delwar Hossain, should have been hauled up over his misuse of food items from the parliament cafeteria. Justice M.A. Aziz should have been shown the door when all those non-existent voters made their way into the electoral roll. Fazlur Rahman Potol ought to have been reprimanded by Khaleda Zia over his use of words from Pakistan's late dictator Ayub Khan to inspire Bangladesh's cricketers.

These realities are truths we have known. What we have not known are the resignations or the dismissals, for they did not happen.

But Suranjit Sengupta has resigned. In the 1970s, Tajuddin Ahmed and Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury resigned. Fasihuddin Mahtab walked out of the Ershad regime in the 1980s. They prove the old point -- that there are yet men of dignity around to inform us that they value decency in public life.

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THIS DAY IN HISTORY

April 18

1946 The International Court of Justice holds its inaugural meeting in The Hague, Netherlands.

1954 Gamal Abdal Nasser seizes power in Egypt.

1955 29 nations meet at Bandung, Indonesia, for the first Asian-African Conference.

1961 The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, a cornerstone of modern international relations, is adopted.

1992 General Abdul Rashid Dostum revolts against President Mohammad Najibullah of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and allies with Ahmed Shah Massoud to capture Kabul.

1996 In Lebanon, at least 106 civilians are killed when the Israel Defense Forces shell the UN compound at Qana where more than 800 civilians had taken refuge.