

06/05/1998

Comment against Annan getting award harsh

Shanti Aman

ONE wonders Myint Zan's motives (NST, April 15) in making it almost a personal crusade that United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan should not receive the Nobel Peace Prize this year.

It is baffling, especially since Annan's "do-or-die" efforts to broker a peaceful solution to the impending threat of another Gulf war were successful beyond expectations and universally acknowledged as a brilliant manoeuvre in diplomacy.

Agreed, the UN Secretary-General was performing his duty. But, then again, so were the previous laureates in Myint Zan's list. They were all carrying out their duties to the best of their ability.

This is what the Nobel Peace Prize recognises - excellence in doing duty beyond what the station calls for.

Myint Zan is harsh in arguing against Annan getting the Nobel Peace Prize, but does not seem to apply the same logic to the list of previous winners.

Myint Zan says that Mother Teresa was a "deserving person" but she too (the writer seems to forget) was doing her duty (to God) in a most glorious manner. She richly deserved the prize and the acknowledgement, and so too does Annan.

If we subscribe to Myint Zan's logic, then we can rob Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad of the awards and accolades conferred on him by the King of Saudi Arabia, the Government of India and other associations and nations that have seen fit to recognise his statesmanship. Because, by Myint Zan's logic, he was merely carrying out the requirements of his office.

Applying Myint Zan's logic again, let us nominate Pol Pot for the Nobel Peace Prize. He did, undeniably, unite the whole world against him and his evil regime.

Another contender could be India's "Bandit Queen" Phoolan Devi - once India's most wanted outlaw. Her claim to the award is that she had "been fighting for justice for the downtrodden women ..." (The Malay Mail, April 21). One sure vote for her candidacy would come from Myint Zan.