

Let the Parties Pass the Test

Tomorrow the nation goes to polls. Most of our citizens are keeping their fingers crossed for fear of some unforeseen development bashing the election proceedings.

Their good work has now to be matched by the electorate performing as duty-bound to go to the polling centres with full faith in the discharge of their right, beating all their misgivings.

This is a tricky and mean situation which can set at naught all that the nation has striven for over the last two years with tremendous individual and collective sacrifices.

The EC must stop polling at all centres facing the minimum breach of the rules and norms. Regardless of a person's standing or a group's power or pull, anyone found influencing or obstructing the conduct of the polls must be restrained straightway by arrest.

The greatest time of challenge will be when at the end of counting the results are announced locally. If situation gets out of control then, the announcement may be cancelled altogether but not the polls.

The integrity as well as the right sense of responsibility and efficiency to discharge that on the part of the caretaker government and the Election Commission have been proved beyond reproach.

Campaign Aberration

An audio cassette imitating Sheikh Hasina's voice has recorded a number of statements which the Awami League chief is never known to have made. The cassette, thankfully, has been seized by the police in Jhalakathi.

Our electorate could very much question the intention of circulating such cassettes, pamphlets and brochures which have no recognized sponsors. This is an ill attempt to deceive the simple people.

We are delighted that there are people who are on their guard against such criminal attempts. In Jhalakathi the police acted on the information provided by a few conscious people about the existence of the cassette produced with an ill motive.

Yawing Yangon

Neighbouring Myanmar has over the years become quite synonymous with monotony for the sheer fixity of its political history. Caught in the welter of the movement for democracy spear-headed by the indomitable Suu Kyi on one hand and the relentless often ruthless disavowal of it by the tyrannical military regime on the other, Myanmar is anything but sight for the eyes grown sore from constant observation of democracy's plight in the Third World.

Voters' Sovereignty and Exercise of Power

by Kabir U Ahmad

More than asking for a job or a road or a school in the locality, voters must realise and assert their key position in the entire political power-structure of the country.

Now that uncertainty about the June 12th election is gradually vanishing, thanks to the firm handling of the situation by the caretaker government and the election commission as well as the cooperation of the political parties, the prospect of holding the election, is getting brighter.

However, it is at the election time that an opportunity arises for the voters to confront the future lawmakers of the country and to press upon them with their wants, desires and expectations.

voters that they are the people with whom lies the ultimate sovereignty as well as the right to exercise the power of the state. In any democracy, people are the ultimate source of sovereignty and power.

constitutional rights and powers. In the second place, election is a means of getting approval of the people for the exercise of power at the highest level of the government.

The government, therefore, is accountable for its activities to the representatives of the people in parliament on a day-to-day basis since going back to the people directly every week or every month to explain its conduct is not practicable.

What follows from the above analysis is that the sovereign power of the state originates from the people which is enshrined in the constitution of the country. Therefore, sovereignty voters elect their representatives to parliament and delegate their sovereignty and power to the parliament.

Through the Eyes of a Retired Army Officer

by Major (Retd) A M Agha Yusuf

I have read with interest the two articles of Major-General (Retd) M Khalidur Rahman (Former DG BDR) regarding the interpretation of Army Laws and what actions are to be taken before dismissing an officer (DS May 26 and 28).

Defence. There would be nothing wrong from the Army point of view if the Chief of DFI had noticed the rebellious attitude in the two officers it was his duty first to inform the Chief of Army Staff.

We never felt small. We could walk around with our heads high and we had the courage to speak in the open meeting (DARBAR) to criticise policies, if we thought the Commandant was wrong.

OPINION

"All is Not Well at ZIA": An Understatement

M A Rahman

I have followed with keen interest the reports published in The Daily Star in its issues of May 15 and 29 together with the editorials of May 17 and May 31.

out of Calcutta and made Dhaka its terminus. The nation's prestige was greatly enhanced. Within few years many other airlines started operating into ZIA.

However, I am deeply anguished to read these stories carried out in your daily. I have been in charge of the airport since independence of Bangladesh. On 18 December 1971, I took over as Airport Manager of the old airport at Tejgaon.

I still recall an incident which occurred in 1986. A That aircraft was overflying the Bay of Bengal when one of its engines caught fire.

I retired from service in 1988, by then promoted to the rank of Director of ZIA. In my farewell speech, I recounted to a very grateful and thankful audience how I had started my career in 1956 as an Assistant Aerodrome Officer in the Department of Civil Aviation under the Central Government of erstwhile Pakistan.

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These days we hear from wise planners of the country that the whole map of Bangladesh will be dotted with airports. We also hear of an ambitious Chittagong development project worth hundreds of crores of taka.

(The writer is ex-Director of Zia International Airport.)

To the Editor...

"Fake Voter" Sir, The letter (fake voter), that appeared in The Daily Star on June 2 has pricked my conscience.

Neighbouring Myanmar has over the years become quite synonymous with monotony for the sheer fixity of its political history. Caught in the welter of the movement for democracy spear-headed by the indomitable Suu Kyi on one hand and the relentless often ruthless disavowal of it by the tyrannical military regime on the other, Myanmar is anything but sight for the eyes grown sore from constant observation of democracy's plight in the Third World.

But, hopefully, the government must have taken some effective measures to offset the fake voting and protect each voter's rights. Such measures are not publicised well. All classes need to know these well, to claim their rights. It is not clear, if the issued ID Cards or the 3rd part of the EC's Form-2 (held by the updated voters), will be of any use for identification purpose in poll.

Now, after 21 years of that nightmare, Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina once again declared that her party, if voted to power, would run the country on national consensus basis. What is that supposed to mean? To us it sounds like an omen. Are we going to be subject of autocracy once again? This burning question should be addressed clearly. We do not want to become instru-

ments of political experiment of any party in any way in future. We want to see that democratic norms and values are safeguarded so that power can be changed only through free and fair elections at fixed intervals.

A R Choudhury Uttara-Dhaka

BKSAL in disguise?

Sir, In the year 1975 the then ruling party Awami League, on the pretext of governing the country on a national consensus basis, introduced one party system in the country by creating BKSAL through the 4th amendment of the constitution in the Jatiyo Sangshad, within minutes without any deliberations.

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Report of the Enquiry Committee

Sir, An enquiry committee has been constituted to find out happened in the Army during 18-20 May '96. The date of submission of the report of the committee was fixed on the 5th June '96. But objection has been raised in this regard on the ground that the findings of the committee may influence result of the coming general elections scheduled to be held on June 12, 1996 as it was alleged that a particular political party had played active role in the attempted coup, that foiled due to the President's prompt and prudent decision of sacking the then Army Chief along with few high officials with the aid of the patriotic members of the Army.

Now the question arises as to why the committee should make any delay in submission of their report where the national interest is involved? If alleged involvement is proven to be a fact, then it must have come out in public in time so that people could save themselves from committing any blunder in casting vote.

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