

Getting to the Truth

The foreign and local observer groups are unanimous in their opinion that the June 12 polls were held freely, fairly, transparently and peacefully in quite a palpable manner.

Mind you, the experienced foreign observer groups spread all over the country and they visited polling centres not of others' choice but theirs.

From the plethora of positive comments made by international observer groups we cull out three very significant ones.

The NDI were "impressed," said Solarz, "by the fact that only 123 polling stations of a total of 25,957 — less than half of one per cent — were to be discontinued due to disruptions."

The SAARC non-governmental team inter alia said in its interim assessment, "the clear manifestation of people's aspirations in favour of peace, order and democratic governance also contributed to the conduct of the polls in substantial compliance with the electoral laws and procedures."

Our own perception is when the margin between the total number of votes and the turnout was the slimmest recorded in the history of our national polls, there was no scope for any massive rigging.

Much as we have respect for the conclusions reached globally, so have we heard with respect the charges of irregularities brought up before the Election Commission by BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia.

Chance for Gowda

Indian Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda has won the vote of confidence in parliament. His United Front Alliance was expected to win the vote on the confidence motion ever since the Congress Party expressed its readiness to support his government.

Both the United Front and the Congress were averse to seeing the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in power and they have steadfastly held on to that point. For the Congress to give a try to form a government this time was out of the question.

Yet there is no doubt that the political uncertainties in India have been brought to an end, albeit for the time being. The issue that counts is whether the Congress support is totally unconditional or not.

From the Fallen

The June 12 elections have left us with, among other things, the razor-edge scenario of epitaphs of some prominent political leaders. They looked at the intensely focussed polls as a measure of their popular credential only to meet with the fate of humiliation determined by the public rejection and the accompanying agonising media attention.

The defeats, in some cases by yawning margin, of people with loads of experience point at the emerging reality of voters being discerning and self-asserting than ever before.

The BNP has reasons to believe that the poor show of the seasoned campaigners went a long way in its failure to muster enough seats, and thus retain its grip on power.

President Bill Clinton has fulfilled his pre-election promise on Bosnia very skillfully showing a sharp diplomatic edge over others. As they say, he has got the cake and the icing too!

As regards the behaviour of the Bosnian Serb leaders, much depends on how the Serbian President Milosevic handles them, because it was he who had represented the Bosnian Serbs at the Dayton summit and had signed on the agreement.

Clinton's Bosnia Policy: New Twists and Turns

Within three months of his assumption of office as President, Clinton tried to give shape to his pre-election declared policy on Bosnia. It was a two-pronged approach; first, exempt Bosnian government from arms embargo, and secondly, use of air attacks on

Clinton was elected by the American people more as a 'Domestic President' than a 'star performer' in international affairs, like Ronald Reagan or George Bush. But soon Clinton made a successful debut as a foreign policy President with an skilful 'operation' in Bosnia despite all sustained efforts, at home and abroad, to cut him down, to vilify him.

But this rather unexpected 'switch-over' from domestic issues to foreign affairs, doesn't mean that Clinton had betrayed his voters. His economic bills that the

To the Editor...

Single-party government by AL

Sir, There is a general impression that Awami League is unlikely to secure single majority in the Parliament, and therefore must enter into a coalition with another party to form a government.

The total number of constituencies is 300. However, in case of nine members, they were elected from 25 constituencies but will be sworn in as members only in respect of nine constituencies. Consequently, 16 constituencies will fall vacant for by-election in future by the newly appointed government of the country.

At present Awami League has 133 seats declared in its favour. Of this, five seats are to be given up by members elected from more than one seat. Hence Awami League requires another 15 seats in order to secure a single majority in the parliament.

It is not totally inconceivable for Awami League to win 15 out of the remaining 29 constituencies in respect of which the Commission is yet to pronounce the election result.

Optimal subjects in BCS exam

Sir, In the process of appointing officers at the Public Service Commission (PSC) makes the candidates undergo a 'written test' for 500 marks in five compulsory subjects and for 300 marks in three chosen subjects. The candidates face disparity from the optional

Clinton has the Last Laugh

Bosnia Born-again: Uncle Sam

Looking Beyond Horizon?

by AMM Shahabuddin

American people swallowed willingly and palatably, were a healthy 'package of programme of action with spending cuts' and new taxes to reduce budget deficits and at the same time to open a new vista with more and more employment and checking of the 'ill-health' of the US economy which the 'Reganomics' or Reagan's 'trickle-down' economics couldn't achieve.

Voice against Isolationism

In his Union of the State speech to the Congress in January last, President Clinton declared that "American global leadership is strong and must remain so."

After putting Bosnia on its peace-track, Clinton is now looking beyond the horizon of Bosnia, perhaps to become a part of "European power". He is trying to rope in some of the newly-independent eastern European powers into NATO in some capacity or other.

Macedonia: Another Milestone

Before entering head-long into the Bosnia issue, Clinton made another strategic move, this time through UN to prevent spill over of the Bosnian war into other concerned parts of Europe, particularly in Kosovo, a province of Serbia, dominated by ethnic Muslims of Albanian origin.

It was the rising tension between the Serbs and the ethnic Albanian Muslims that prompted UN to launch this preventive action, at the initiative of America. At a recent meeting of the South Balkan defence ministers in Albania, US Defence Secretary William Perry praised the role of the UN mission in Macedonia in preventing conflagration in that area.

Single-party government by AL

(chosen) subjects and are thereby being deprived of the constitutional guarantee of equal right of every citizen to get service opportunity in the following manner:

1) As the students of science group or BUET students can choose from subjects related to science, they can obtain 90-95 per cent marks if all answers are given correctly and thereby can get 270-285 marks out of 300. But a student of arts group, bearing the same merit and calibre can not obtain more than 210-225 in three optional subjects at a rate of 70-75 per cent, if all answers are correct and complete.

2) In the routine maintained by PSC for optional subjects, some candidates get more gaps for preparation than the candidates of other optional subjects. Thus disparity among them is created.

3) Sometimes with the question of a subject becoming traditional, a candidate gets advantage over others with non-traditional questions for their subjects.

Thus, PSC can not select candidates objectively and properly. To remove such disparity, PSC must abolish optional subjects from written test keeping provisions equally for all for an unified system.

Md Al Mamun 347, Zahurul Haq Hall Dhaka University

For emergency power supply

Sir, Electricity has long become one of the essentials of city life. When electricity fails in any area due to some mechanical fault or other reason, it becomes a foremost duty for the concerned, electric complaint office to take prompt action thereby in restoring electric supply to that area.

Bosnia. In this dramatic development, the Bosnian Serbs were represented not by their leaders, but by Serbian President, Milosevic, who signed on their behalf.

The whole scenario in Bosnia today is dominated by the 60,000 NATO implementation force, under Dayton accord. Thus the peace plan of Clinton was not only accepted by the warring factions, including the Serbs and their mentors, but also it received full support from the European powers. Once again it was proved that when America leads stoutly, others follow it.

his Bosnia policy vis-a-vis Europe.

hurdles created by the "isolationism" Republicans in the execution of his independent foreign policy in Bosnia and other places.

The Republicans' hesitancy to get involved in the First and Second World Wars was due to their religiously-follower policy of isolationism. But the Republicans know how to fish in the troubled waters. They enthusiastically floated, during the two world wars, commercial policy of "lease-land" and "cash and carry" to fill the coffers with commercial gains during these terrible days faced by the West.

The word "maturity" as I see it has a universal connotation. Among others its essential ingredients for an individual often relates to some of the very basic human attributes like kindness, generosity, forgiveness, tolerance so on and so forth. These attributes however more often than not are co-related to specific situation and circumstances. To cite an example I told my daughter that as much as saying prayers constitute a part and parcel of practising Islam one also needs to understand that for many others of different faith in other parts of the world people of other faiths may indulge in sacrificing animals and say prayers. The crux of the philosophy is that they to theirs and we to ours.

teasing the womenfolk particularly the girls, gamblers, drunkards, all sorts of evil makers causing public nuisance. There were news that known ill-famed notorious terrorists were noticed to instantly disappear for fear of being apprehended on mere suspicion of appearance of police in burqa. There is nothing to feel any jubilation in this.

Meanwhile, it is strongly felt that the higher authority of DESA should arrange to provide some reserve transformers for meeting up needs of emergency situation. Necessary technical support with specific vehicle for installing transformers and other accessories should also be provided to the control room.

It is noteworthy that Islam prohibits impersonation and it is not without reason. It is imperative that the government lose no time to issue strict directives for employing other devices than the use of veil or burqa by the police. Wearing of veil by the women police may, however, be considered.

Police in burqa

Sir, Many may acclaim the recent police innovation. Innovation to wear burqa or veil to surprise the law breaking criminals, offenders, malefactors, hooligans, rogues, those

League for the next 20 years, the world history might have been very different, regrets Wells. It was, indeed, the Republican's isolationist policy which brought another devastating war in 1939.

Unfortunately, the sad episode was repeated by the Republicans during Second World War with the Democrat President Franklin Roosevelt, who was considered as the most intelligent and courageous exponent of world affairs. But he was "chained," so to say, by the US public opinion which was influenced by the powerful Republicans. So for the first two years of the WW II, America kept itself aloof and maintained a safe distance from what was happening in Europe and in the rest of the world. At last, it had to get involved in war only when Japan attacked US Navy stationed at Pearl Harbour in 1941. America then declared war against the Axis Powers, led by Hitler. And Britain leased its Atlantic bases to America.

Thus, Roosevelt showed

Clinton Breaks the Same Egg-shell

Another Democrat President, Bill Clinton, again pathetically became a "prisoner of conscience" in the hands of the powerful Republicans during the Bosnian war.

Clinton stood up and broke the shackles by challenging the obstructions and manipulations created by the Republicans and forced ahead with his peace plan. He seems to have already crossed the bridge by removing all hurdles put on his way, at home and abroad, and has been successful in bringing up into action under NATO umbrella all its participants to show a challenging face to the Serbian hordes to cut to their size. Even France which left NATO some 30 years ago, came under the NATO to join forces in Bosnia. Of course, France is now coming back to NATO as a permanent member under a 'face-saving' device of creating a "new NATO".

The subject is as vast as it is complex. The views on the matter do certainly differ from individual to individual. My main purpose therefore is not to make some scholarly deliberations on the subject, but put forward a point of view which may generate some interests among some people without casting any aspersions on any other views or individuals. The other objective is: put us to thinking on the subject itself and the significance there of in the development of a society and a nation at large.

There is also the aspect of maturity which relates to our passing harsh judgements over others on moral counts. So many of us are often ready to condemn a prostitute, a thief, or even a mere urchin on the street. Will condemnation alone bring about a change in their lives? Should not one also pause and think for a while and probe and soon we shall find out as to how many of us are truly to be blamed? We may have intense disliking for all the dislocation and moral degradation these cause in the society but the truth remains that their misfortune and the pains are as much real as one can imagine of.

Let us come to today's burning question — the issue of the country's Political Maturity. In a few days time we are going to get a government.

Our political scenario recently has failed to display the

requisite maturity for the development of a healthy political environment. Politicians and public alike are beset by senseless demagoguery, falsehood and self-deception, violence and intolerance.

Take for instance the issue of arms recovery. It is common knowledge that nearly all political parties harbour their own armed cadres among students and yet full-throated calls are given by any and all party leaders for clearing the educational institutes of arms. An exercise in demagoguery and self-deception. Admittedly arms do play a 'significant' role in the working of politics all over the world, particularly the Third World countries, however its influence in the educational institutes in Bangladesh seem to be grossly exaggerated and in proportions. Our politicians must be matured enough to realise that this is not only hampering the educational atmosphere of the nation but also corroding the vital fabric of our society at large. No country worth its name can survive without respect for Rule of Law and the realisation that education and education alone is its backbone.

On the other hand, we are gripped by the Indian phobia today. There may be some truth in it. However the fact remains that these are some of the age old tactics used for diverting the people's attention from the failures of the government, conversely tactics used by the politicians alike in gaining advantage for themselves. Be that as it may the matter of concern here should be not what others do but what we are doing or can do. It is high time we should come out of this child's play and act more responsibly, sensibly and in a matured way.

Violence and condemnation seem to be the key aspects of our political activism. We spend hours dissecting one another's misdeeds. We are ready to condemn one another at the drop of a hat and even go to the extent of eliminating our opponents through the barrel of a gun. It appears that tolerance is a bygone virtue and has no place in our politics.

Finally can we not take a lesson or two from the political wisdom recently displayed and the pains are as much real as one can imagine of.

Let us come to today's burning question — the issue of the country's Political Maturity. In a few days time we are going to get a government.

Our political scenario recently has failed to display the

After putting Bosnia on its peace-track, Clinton is now looking beyond the horizon of Bosnia, perhaps to become a part of "European power". He is trying to rope in some of the newly-independent eastern European powers into NATO in some capacity or other. They are coming bit by bit. And US move to establish bilateral relations, economic and defensive, with countries like Hungary and eastern European countries, is a clear pointer to which way the wind is blowing in Europe. And the recent meeting of southern Balkan states held in Albania, focussing on Bosnian, crisis vis-a-vis related situations in Macedonia and Kosovo, conveyed a clear message that America can no longer be 'isolated' from European affairs. In fact, America is already working as a "European power", rather than an outsider poking its nose into the domestic affairs of Europe. Even the recent summit of NATO powers has clearly proved how indispensable America's position is in European security even if the proposed "Europe-only" Task Force is formed to meet any eventuality, because the proposed force will have to work under NATO umbrella, using NATO communication facilities, logistics, and other assets that belong to America.

Hang Together, or Fall Apart

During his recent whirlwind tour of Yugoslavia, Bosnia, Italy and Hungary, President Clinton tried to convince all concerned that peace and security of Europe depends on the policy and attitude of the concerned states toward their peaceful destination not only in war-torn Bosnia but all around. Either, every one hangs together, or all falls apart seems to be the thrust of the message he wants to convey. One thing is clear that on the success of his Bosnia policy, much depends his own success in the upcoming presidential election in November next. There are many hostile forces, at home and abroad, that want to foil his attempt to re-enter the President's House for the second term. But Clinton seems to have skillfully hit the bull's eye in challenging the opposing forces. Clinton might have been elected as a "Domestic President" in 1991, but the rising compulsions around the world since his assumption as the president of America, prompted him to take lead in world affairs as a "Foreign Policy President." Perhaps he is destined to become the world president of the only superpower left in the field after the demise of former Soviet Union, to put things in their proper perspective. But whether Clinton deserves the mantle of Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt, only time will show.

Clinton Breaks the Same Egg-shell

Another Democrat President, Bill Clinton, again pathetically became a "prisoner of conscience" in the hands of the powerful Republicans during the Bosnian war. But history was repeated again. Clinton stood up and broke the shackles by challenging the obstructions and manipulations created by the Republicans and forced ahead with his peace plan. He seems to have already crossed the bridge by removing all hurdles put on his way, at home and abroad, and has been successful in bringing up into action under NATO umbrella all its participants to show a challenging face to the Serbian hordes to cut to their size. Even France which left NATO some 30 years ago, came under the NATO to join forces in Bosnia. Of course, France is now coming back to NATO as a permanent member under a 'face-saving' device of creating a "new NATO".

OPINION Maturity and Politics

Shamsher A Choudhury

My daughter who is in her 12th grade now and 19 years of age once asked me: "What is called maturity?" For a while I was completely lost and then regained my composure and began concentrating on how to respond to her complex question. I do not recall as to my response word for word but I recollect in general what I said.

The subject is as vast as it is complex. The views on the matter do certainly differ from individual to individual. My main purpose therefore is not to make some scholarly deliberations on the subject, but put forward a point of view which may generate some interests among some people without casting any aspersions on any other views or individuals. The other objective is: put us to thinking on the subject itself and the significance there of in the development of a society and a nation at large.

There is also the aspect of maturity which relates to our passing harsh judgements over others on moral counts. So many of us are often ready to condemn a prostitute, a thief, or even a mere urchin on the street. Will condemnation alone bring about a change in their lives? Should not one also pause and think for a while and probe and soon we shall find out as to how many of us are truly to be blamed? We may have intense disliking for all the dislocation and moral degradation these cause in the society but the truth remains that their misfortune and the pains are as much real as one can imagine of.

Let us come to today's burning question — the issue of the country's Political Maturity. In a few days time we are going to get a government.

Our political scenario recently has failed to display the