

Prime Concerns of the Prime Minister

Let BNP set a new standard

The near midnight news that BNP has decided to respect the verdict of the people and join the Sangsad came as a great relief to all.

BNP's obsession with what they feel to be a defeat and with the theory that this has been a result of machinations has so far prevented the party from trying to read the message there is in the people's verdict.

Cut this surfeit of self-righteousness. As a first step in that direction we are happy that BNP took the poll results graciously as it did last night.

Human Rights Record

The Amnesty International (AI) paints a disappointing picture of Bangladesh in terms of the country's human rights record.

Along with various human rights bodies and organisations we had been demanding the abolition of the SPA. Instead of that demand being met we got a tough anti-terrorism law in virtual extension of the SPA.

Apart from this, the influence it thus leaves on society is of a malevolent kind. It loses the moral authority to punish criminals and forces inimical to a peaceful and progressive civil society.

Let us hope the new government will take up the human rights issue on a priority basis and do away with the SPA and all such black laws as soon as possible.

Luminous Remembrance

In the long, lighted highway of life, she has crossed another milestone. Sufia Kamal is 86. On Thursday last, the grand old lady who has been epitomising the luminous consciousness of people in this part of the world and, particularly, the creative psyche of women for a long time,

Inbued with the principle of the very few women of the subcontinent who broke away from the social legacy of the unhealthy masculine assertion at the cost of the feminine spirit, Sufia Kamal's life lies there as an open book of inspiration and direction for the young generations awaiting their turn of muliebrity.

She has always been the most vociferous champion of the spirit of our War of Liberation. The other most prominent feature of her life has been the intellectual crusade against the male chauvinistic prejudice that has a history of working against female participation in national development.

Sufia Kamal has outgrown the adversities of time to be a beacon to the women of this country. Happy birthday Sufia Kamal, live well and long.

ACCORDING to the latest available election results, Bangladesh Awami League (AL) clinched a single majority in the Parliament bagging 146 seats.

Once given the captainship, what should be Sheikh Hasina's thoughts of the moment? The only way that she can survive with political dignity is to choose a new path of ruling this country.

Let us cite a few examples. None of the governments so far attempted to free the TV/Radio from the clutches of the ruling party.

To this effect, she can call upon all political parties — within or outside the Parliament — to help her minimise the rot in this connection.

On the economic front, her prime concern should be to continue with the ongoing reform process in Bangladesh.

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Beneath the Surface

by Abdul Bayes

are concerned. Unfortunately, the enthusiasm hovering around such needed changes soon fell flat and the success recoiled in the absence of (i) a public debate on the main items.

In this connection, the role of foreign and domestic investments in Bangladesh needs to be evaluated. Our neighbouring countries are experiencing hefty growth of foreign investments.

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The Problem of Election Expenses Still Remains Unresolved

The system of public scrutiny of the financial statements of the MPs is an effective way of ensuring the legislators' accountability — both political and financial — to the people.

THE remarkably higher percentage of voters turnout in the June 12 national polls clearly indicates that our people, if provided with a peaceful atmosphere, are keen to actively participate in the process of building democratic institutions.

According to the law, each candidate is legally obliged to send a statement on the source of his or her election expenses to the Returning Officer concerned within a week from the date of withdrawal of candidature.

The candidates' response to the pre-election obligations being very poor, it is presumable that their response to the post-electoral obligations would be poorer.

In all mature democracies of the world the citizens are legally entitled to scrutinise the financial statements sent to the EC by the candidates concerned.

For the purpose of making payments of the election expenses, and the election agent of a returned candidate is obliged to submit to the Returning Officer a statement of all payments made by him each day together with all the bills and receipts within 15 days after the publication of the name of the returned candidate.

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parties including Bangladesh Nationalist Party and Awami League have evidently printed, and pasted on city walls, many such posters.

Having no mechanism of its own to identify players behind such violations of rules, the EC would never be in a position to punish the law-breaking political parties.

On top of all, the EC must develop a mechanism of its own to examine the documents sent in by political parties and candidates.

In conclusion, Ms Wazed, we sincerely wish you luck as you face a most difficult task ahead. It is a thankless and tiring job — if you do it well — and your only reward will be the salvation of this country.

To the Editor...

Please stop it

Sir, As a citizen of Bangladesh I am anxiously observing inter party allegations and counter allegations to each other in different forms and manners on the ground of recently held general election which are not at all a good symptom of preserving the democratic culture.

It is a recognized norm in democracy to respect the people's verdict, as people are the only source of all power. It is my request to all parties to respect people's opinion and to engage themselves in activities for the prosperity of the whole nation.

I am hopeful about our future democracy notwithstanding our realistic limitations. Shaikhul Islam, West Agargaon, Dhaka

An appeal to HBFC

Sir, The HBFC was set up by the government to help the owners of land in the urban areas to build houses with its loan with a view to easing the housing problem in one hand, and to develop towns and cities of Bangladesh, on the other.

Disappointed

Sir, I was absolutely disappointed by Mr Mahfuz Anam's attitude in the BTV programme 'Sobyanee Jante Chai' which was telecast on the 9th of June, 1996 at 10:30 pm and in which BNP was the invited political party.

Moreover, his journalistic sense seemed to be blurred with his emotion. Throughout the programme, I was under the impression that he must have personal grudge against that party (BNP) due to the very fact of his liking of another one.

It requires great deal of boldness and bluntness to confront the nation after five years of disgraceful misrule in the history of the sub-continent. Mta Md Alamgir Haider, 346/8, Moripuri Para, Dhaka

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Open letter to Sheikh Hasina

Wasim Rahman

Please accept my heartfelt congratulations to you, and to the members of your party, for your momentous victory in the parliamentary elections held on June 12th.

This election has been a vital lesson that Bangladeshis are finally reaching a level of maturity where they are beginning to exercise their rights in true democratic manner.

In the past we have seen whichever party forms the government, it promptly begins to fill their personal coffers and vigorously enacts profits for their self-advancement. It is an open secret in this country that leaders of the party in government amasses wealth in amounts that are disgustingly high for a country as poor as Bangladesh.

Knowing this, it is very important now to stay in tune with the needs of your people and their opinions. The last government paid no heed to all that was said and written against their policies. There was a widespread dissatisfaction and lack of support yet they steered the country to a state of economic collapse.

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