

Dhaka Day by Day

Perennial Politics

by Lavina Ambreen Ahmed

The Westerners might consider weather a conversation opener, but in this part of the globe we rely on a more interesting topic. It's politics of course and the good thing is one doesn't really have to be "enlightened" to engage in political discussions. When the eight letter word (synonymous with trouble) provides so much to muse, moan, cry, criticize, gossip and gloat over, why bother with mundane things like exchanging peasantries or making small talks? And sure enough, no matter how busy the Dhakaite might profess to be, he or she seldom hesitates to waste precious moments in a political chit-chat.

Then again, it's election season: so it's only natural for people to talk about politics. But don't be fooled! The just concluded general election has merely heightened our resolutions and enthusiasm; political polemics go on all year round even at places where you least expect. Often politics is the main deciding factor in the making or breaking of friendships. It's simple really: if political ideologies or party preferences match, two persons might become best buddies while sworn enemies if they clash. It's perfectly normal to be politically conscious, but within a limit that is. During the election, the Dhaka dwellers were just as hyped up as the political contenders.

In the city, some people actually jump-start their day with politics. How? They wait for the morning newspaper and list all the merits and demerits of their loved and hated parties respectively and broadcast the latest information to interested or disinterested listeners. Most of the time, the victims are family members. A certain gentleman greets his kids every morning with a grin or a scowl (depending on the news) and political updates. In the process, saving the trouble for the offspring to scan the paper for themselves. Though the kids say, the routine is becoming quite exasperating.

Then also in a particularly high security neighbourhood the guards residing in tents are wide awake and very vocal by 7 am. Engrossed in their newspapers they gulp down the developments of *deshi rajniti* (politics) with their morning tea.

We might talk about "each to his/her own opinion" but when it comes to politics, bitter hatred and animosity often develop among the followers of different parties. An individual complains how tense and wary the family members all are during get-togethers. Her father is a diehard supporter of a leading political party while her uncle is soft on its rival. And whenever they are together a contentious debate invariably sparks off. Relatives try to intervene, without success. Surprisingly, after a 30-45 minutes of heated argument they are back to normal again. It's almost as if they enjoy the verbal battles while running the party mood for everyone else.

At times politics can disturb the peace and harmony of a household, obviously when the family members don't agree with one another. A rickshaw-puller recently left his wife for good, when she refused to vote for his favoured party. It was known they were having problems for quite some time. Says the wife, her spouse was constantly badgering her for doing things his way. But, when he tried to coerce her into voting for his chosen candidate, it was the last straw. Marriage or no marriage, some things in life are just too important.

Being politically aware is the way of life here. It's virtually impossible to remain ignorant and lukewarm on political affairs. Anyway, society is hardly sympathetic to those who dare defy the established norms. The apolitical person can do only one thing learn to put up with politics and accept it as yet another inimitable speciality of living in Dhaka city.



Chief Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena presenting a copy of the gazette containing the names of the newly-elected MPs to Chief Adviser Muhammad Habibur Rahman in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Repolling was free, fair: CCHRB

Coordination Council for Human Rights in Bangladesh (CCHRB) said its election observers found the repolling on June 19 as fair and neutral in general, reports BSS.

According to a press release of the organisation, its observers monitored repolling of 122 centres and found that repolling was peaceful and disciplined.

The press release, however, said the observers have reports that BNP candidate in Faridpur-2 constituency Obaidur Rahman distributed money among the voters ahead of the repolling to influence the elections.

They also complained of some mismanagements in the polling centres and received allegations that minority community voters were obstructed to go to the polling centres.

The observers received no major reports of violence or indiscipline and rather observed that even the rival polling agents were drinking tea in some centres where the observers visited receiving information of violence.

Regional tourism workshop begins in Nepal June 26

The two-day third regional workshop and meeting of the Regional Tourism Human Resource Development Committee will begin in Kathmandu on June 26, says a press release.

The workshop is organised by the Colombo-based South Asia Tourism Secretariat as part of the South Asia Integrated Tourism Human Resource Development Programme, which is supported by the European Commission. It will be inaugurated by Chakra Prasa Banstola, Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal.

Delegates from both the public and private sectors of the tourism industry of SAARC countries will attend the workshop and meeting of the regional committee. Dr A. K. Abdul Mubin, Chairman, Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation and Chairman of the Bangladesh National Tourism Human Resource Development Committee, will lead the Bangladesh delegation.

GF for advancement of democratic process

Gano Forum congratulated the majority party in Jatiya Sangsad and called upon all others to play positive role in advancing the democratic process, reports UNB.

A meeting of the party's Standing Committee here yesterday said the conscious participation of the people in the June 12 election brought about a new prospect for institutionalising democracy in the country.

Gano Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain chaired the meeting that once again congratulated the countrymen on their taking part in the peaceful voting.

The party also thanked the caretaker Government and the Election Commission for holding the elections successfully in a very short time.

Physicians Assoc confce begins

Health and Family Welfare Advisor Maj Gen (ret'd) A R Khan yesterday inaugurated the 7th national conference of Association of Physicians of Bangladesh at a hotel here, reports BSS.

Speaking on the occasion Khan underscored the role of the physicians in the improvement of healthcare service in the country. Scientific research and training are essential for this, he said, according to a press release.

Specialist physicians of different branches of medical science took part in the conference and eminent physicians discussed on different important matters of medical science.

The scientific session included Ibrahim Memorial oration, guest speakers session, symposium on hypertension and free paper session.

Presided over by the president of the association Prof Sheikh Nesar Uddin, Ahmed the inaugural session was also addressed by Health Secretary Mohammad Ali, Director General of Health Prof A K Shamsuddin Siddiki, secretary general of the association Dr Selimur Rahman, director of PG Hospital Prof M Tahir and professor of medicine of Dhaka Medical College Tofael Ahmed.

Call to reopen garment factories

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Garments Workers and Employees Federation (BGWER) has demanded immediate re-opening of 'Al-Pasin' and 'Zuki' garment factories in the city.

Addressing a workers' rally in front of the National Press Club, Abul Bashir and Abul Hossain alleged that the owner of the factories had shut down the factories 'illegally'. They also demanded payment of arrears to the workers, introduction of weekly holiday and withdrawal of suspension orders issued against some workers.

'Condoms, best protection against STDs'

The best protection available currently against sexually transmitted diseases, is the consistent and correct use of latex condoms that can reduce a person's risk of all the known STDs, including AIDS, reports UNB.

This observation was attributed to medical experts in a newsletter of the Family Health International (FHI), a US-based non-profit research organisation that specialises in reproductive health.

It noted that medical scientists are looking for new alternatives to prevent the transmission of STDs, but these new products will take many years to perfect.

As awareness of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) has grown, more and more people are seeking ways to protect themselves from these infections.

"Do condoms — male and female — really work?" asks Dr Willard Cates Jr., medical director for FHI.

The simple answer is yes, if used consistently and correctly. Dr Cates wrote in the current issue of FHI quarterly bulletin, Network. The problem is that condoms, whether male or female devices, are used sporadically or incorrectly.

He also cited numerous studies that demonstrate how effective latex condoms could be, provided they were used correctly during every act of intercourse.

Many health experts believe the female condom, which is not widely available and has not been adequately studied to confirm its potential for STD protection, probably protects against STDs, including AIDS.

One way for people to reduce their risk of infection is simply talking to their partners about sexual concerns and fears scientific research shows that couples who talk about these important topics are more likely to use condoms consistently and correctly.

"It's really a tricky issue," says FHI's Donna Flanagan, who specialises in finding way

to prevent the spread of AIDS, including counseling people to use condoms.

"You have to teach somebody else to do something, like wear a condom. That requires skills. Not only skills in communication, but it also requires self-confidence and assertiveness."

Meanwhile, scientists are experimenting with a variety of new drugs and devices to find better ways of protecting people against STDs. The search for a new class of chemical barriers called microbicides may offer many women a better way to protect themselves, says the FHI newsletter.

These microbicide products would likely resemble the variety of existing spermicides women now use for contraception. Since many women were unable to convince their male partners to use condoms, this would offer them a way to prevent these diseases.

Ideal microbicides would be highly effective against a range of STDs, including HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. They would also be capable of being formulated with or without contraceptive properties, allowing women to become pregnant while being protected against disease.

Drama festival begins

A week-long dream festival began at the Shilpakala Academy yesterday with the staging of 'Raja Sahitya Karkhana' presented by the Chittagong Theatre workshop, says a press release.

Eminent journalist Obaidul Haq inaugurated the festival, while Director General of the academy, Moharak Hossain Khan presided over the opening ceremony. The Director of Drama of the Academy, S M Mohsin also spoke on the occasion. Seven theatre groups selected from across the country are taking part in the festival, organised by the academy.

৩০শে জুন সমাগত

আপনি কি আয়কর নিয়ে চিন্তিত

- জীবন বীমা কর্পোরেশনের একটি পলিসি আপনার এই চিন্তা দূর করতে পারে।
- জীবন বীমা প্রিমিয়াম আয়কর মুক্ত। তাই এই বাঁচানো আয়কর দিয়েই আপনি একটি পলিসি নিন।
- এ ছাড়া ৩০শে জুনের আগেই চলতি পলিসির প্রিমিয়াম জমা দিন এবং এক্ষেত্রে আয়কর রেয়াতের সুযোগ নিন।

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DLP-13-741-17/6 ৬-৭৪৩

Titas Gas Transmission & Distribution Co. Ltd
(A Company of Petrobangla)
105, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue
Kawran Bazar Commercial Area, Dhaka-1215
Telex: 642689 TGNC BJ/Fax: 880-2-813031
Phone: 819380/PABX: 812135-42 (Extn: 146)

Invitation for Bids (I.F.B) for Procurement of Ball Valves Under Cash Foreign Exchange

Date of Issuance of I.F.B. : 22nd June 96

1. Sealed Bids are invited from the bonafide manufacturers or their authorised agents for supply of Ball Valves under cash foreign exchange.

Sl No	IFB No	Description of Material	Cost of tender document	Bid Closing Date
1.	PD 2312/368-BV	Ball Valve	Tk 1000.00 OR US\$ 24.00	07-08-1996

2. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from Deputy General Manager (Purchase) at the above address.

3. Tender documents may be purchased by any interested bidder or their authorised representative upon payment of the cost of respective documents from Accounts Department of this Company at the above address from 09:00 hrs. to 13:00 hrs. on all working days with effect from 24-06-1996. Copy of Money Receipt evidencing purchase of Tender documents is to be furnished with the bid. No document will be sold on the bid closing date.

4. All bids accompanied by a bid security for 2.5% of bid amount in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order from any Scheduled Bank located in Bangladesh or Bank Guarantee issued by a Scheduled Bank in Bangladesh or from any reputable foreign bank, duly endorsed by a Scheduled Bank in Bangladesh must be delivered to Titas Gas Transmission & Distribution Co. Ltd. at the above address on or before 11:00 hrs. of the closing date of the respective I.F.B. The bids will be opened on the same day at 11:15 hrs. in presence of bidders, if any. Should this day happen to fall on any holiday, bids shall be opened at the same hours on the first subsequent working day.

5. The Company reserves the right to accept any bid or reject all the bids without assigning any reason whatsoever.

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Deputy General Manager
(Purchase)



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