

Welfare Council for EPZ

WORKERS' rights have been as close to our heart as trade union excesses have been remote to it. We think they are mutually exclusive and lie at the two extremities of our likes and dislikes.

Against this backdrop, we are happy at the turn of events centring around the controversial question of granting trade union right to workers at the Export Processing Zone (EPZ).

Such a balanced dispensation should allay the concern of foreign investors over irresponsible trade unionism at the EPZs.

Registration of Private Schools

THE decision to amend the 38-year-old Registration of Private Schools Ordinance, 1962 is indeed a welcome step. In recent times, private institutions offering O and A level courses, and international baccalaureate or equivalent course of foreign universities have sprouted at an unprecedented pace.

The proposed bill also deserves appreciation for its two specific features. First, it delimits a 90-day period for inspection of a private school upon application for registration.

Let's hope there is no regulatory overkill to curb or impair the potential of the schools which have already carved their place among the top in the region, if not the world.

Basu into Twilight

AFTER long 23 years in power, the Marxist Chief Minister of West Bengal Jyoti Basu, 87, has hung his boots, leaving behind an indelible imprint on the political history of India.

Basu's achievements, as a visionary and an administrator, are manifold. He strengthened the role of the panchayat, carried out land reforms and altered the traditional power structure in rural West Bengal which remained his bastion of power for a long time.

He has been quite successful in maintaining communal harmony in West Bengal and remains poised to fight for secularism.

Although his stronghold of power lay in the countryside of West Bengal and the Left Front he had led were to fare not too well in the last municipal polls, yet it goes to his credit that he put a new face to Calcutta which had been dubbed a decadent city by former Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Basu's contributions towards the strengthening of ties between Bangladesh and India will be cherished in the hearts and minds of people for a long time. He always valued co-operation in business and commerce with Bangladesh.

We wish him good health and his successor Buddhadev Bhattacharya godspeed.

Musharraf's Turnabout

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nothing new. He has said that so many times before. He has been also saying that he is willing to talk at any level, at any-time and at any place.

Musharraf reacted in a positive manner to the proposal when I placed it before him at Islamabad five months ago. All guns covertly or overtly on both sides should stop for six months to create a peaceful atmosphere for talks on Kashmir and other subjects.

It was difficult to bring round Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, who considered the Kargil operation a stab in the back after he had led the Lahore goodwill bus mission, against all odds.

"I am exasperated," Musharraf told the BBC while commenting on Pakistan's ties with India. He gave the impression as if he had done whatever he could. "The ball is in India's court," he said. This is

ahead with the proposal. I rang up the Pakistan High Commissioner in New Delhi, Qazi Ashraf Khan, to request him to arrange my immediate meeting with Musharraf to work out modalities for the ceasefire.

BETWEEN THE LINES

Kuldip Nayar writes from New Delhi

Musharraf would send no reply. Because, he said, when Musharraf agreed to the proposal he had not taken into account his domestic compulsions.

When there was no response from Musharraf for days, I phoned former Pakistan Finance Minister Mabashir Hussain, who knew about my effort. He rang up Foreign Minister Abdus Sattar, who is not considered friendly to India.

This was nothing new. He had told me the same thing when I had broached with him the ceasefire proposal some months earlier in Islamabad. My impres-

sion is that he suspected that New Delhi was behind my proposal to know Pakistan's reaction. That might be the reason for his insistence that the proposal should come through its High Commission in Delhi.

Three weeks ago, a meeting of South Asians Human Rights forum took me to Lahore. Long before my departure I had informed the Pakistan High Commissioner about my visit with the hope that Musharraf or anyone on his behalf would contact me to take up the matter further. The

Qazi told me that he had let "everyone at Islamabad" know about my visit. After three days of stay at Lahore, I returned to New Delhi without the Pakistan government contacting me directly or indirectly.

I have not been able to figure out why Musharraf agreed to a cease-fire and then decided to stay quiet. There may have been pressures from the fundamentalists or from his own army commanders once the proposal for a ceasefire gained currency.

The mistake which the Pakistani rulers commit is not to take into account India's determination on Kashmir. By this time

Pakistan should have realised that it cannot take away Kashmir from India forcibly. It should also have realised that no government of India can present the state to Pakistan on a platter.

Still, there has to be a settlement. This cannot take place until peace prevails so that all efforts are directed towards finding a solution to satisfy India, Pakistan and the Kashmiris.

If Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah goes to Rawalpindi to attend the wedding of JKL president Amanullah Khan's daughter to Hurriyat leader Abdul Ghani Lone's son, there may be an opportunity for talks between the Kashmiris on both sides.

Bush or Gore?

What will a Gore victory mean to Pakistan? While traditionally Democrats are taken in Pakistan to be "soft" on India and hostile to Pakistan, Clinton enjoyed excellent relations with Pakistani Americans, his pragmatic disposition probably stopped him from imposing harsher sanctions against Pakistan.

former Reformist Party candidate and founder Ross Perot has endorsed Bush. In what may be a stinging slap to any home-boy, Gore may well lose his home State of Tennessee to Bush.

The last days of the campaign have seen frenetic activity as the candidates swept through the must-win so-called battleground states of Michigan, Missouri, Pennsylvania, etc with deep forays into California and Florida. What one sees on TV is that Vice-President Gore's body language increasingly smacks of desperation while that of George Bush, Jr is one of nervous confidence.

has had far bigger leads, as much as 8-9 per cent. Both in California and in Florida, this lead has narrowed dramatically over the past week.

While Bush for better management in government by picking Dick Cheney, former US Defence Secretary (under his father 1988-1992) as his running mate, someone who had the necessary quali-

AS I SEE IT

Ikram Sehgal writes from Karachi

fications to be a heartbeat away from the US Presidency, Vice President Gore made a surprising choice in picking the first member of the Jewish community ever to be the running mate for a US Presidential candidate. Joe Lieberman is a well regarded US Congressman but was not a name well known nationally or internationally before being thrust under the spotlight.

backlash of sorts. What it does for the undecided voter (about 10-12%) only the poll day would tell, however the timing of the disclosure was very suspicious as (1) it was supposed to have been impugned from the record, (2) it was released by a known Democratic activist who runs a website and (3) the information was withheld for four months so as to gain maximum impact just before Election Day.

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loss, but that is never taken into account. In reality the teachers have preferred to become house tutors. The private tuition and coaching by the school/college teachers are no different now from other business or industry. Beyond their institutional stints as teachers they now produce students-for-success in the examination in their home or coaching centre and earn huge turnover.

So who will win? If you believe the media, they seem to be hoping against hope that Gore will win the electoral college if not the popular vote. That is a sure sign that Bush is ahead, but by how much? In the final analysis, the US voter has shown an inclination for change and the Democrats have had eight years in the White House.

Teachers are the beacon light, which will take their pupils to reach their goal. Teachers by their very profession always held in high esteem must embody in themselves a combination of qualities, to be men of head and heart, to be honest and sincere in their ordained profession, to be motivated and guided by the moral obligations to their students, as they do in case of their own children, to educate and groom them to be worthy men/women of the soil.

OPINION

In his article "Expanding Horizons Be a Good Teacher. Build a Good Nation" published on the occasion of World Teachers' Day on the 5<sup>th</sup> October in The Daily Star, Mr M A Bari gave us a good piece to come to know of the background of World Teachers' Day by tracing back the arduous job the UNESCO, from its very inception and later with the ILO, took through holding so many international conventions in Geneva and elsewhere in 1966, 1979, 1985 and 1996 where teachers' contributions vis-a-vis their status were discussed and policies formulated towards that end.

Teaching which was once the noblest and most revered calling has now turned out to be one for earning money with complete erosion of its nobility. The teachers were a community who abided by and taught us the principle of "simple living and high thinking". But that has been made to go with the wind for good.

As an executive of the Bangladesh College/University Teachers' Association, Mr Bari is

quite aware of what our teachers especially at the Higher Secondary levels are upto. It has been the general notion, grown from the practices our teachers are used to, that they are not at all conforming to the standards their profession entail upon them. And Mr Bari should not have avoided reminding them of their frailties and of what to follow to be a good teacher and to build a good nation.

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Like doctors to their patients, the teachers too are supposed to

To be a Good Teacher

A H Dewan

give unremitting attention to their students in the class to enrich the students with the faculties they possess and with those in the prescribed books. They must be taking care and concern about the students and identify the weaknesses they suffer from and take pains to rectify them.

Many teachers even do not care about whether the syllabus is complete, if they do it, do it pell-mell, and the students are hard put to it to get on with. The school/college remains closed for one third of the academic year for various reasons, but whether the syllabus is completed hardly makes them concerned. The students have to complete it of their own for they would sit for the examination, not the teachers.

I found my son as a sophomore

in a big private college to keep away from his classes very often, and on enquiry I was told that the teachers were not serious about explaining a subject/topic or solving a problem with due earnestness and attending such classes were not worth time-spending except for their asking to prepare such and such questions for the examination. The Principal remains so busy with his varied stints that he has no time to supervise the teachers or enquire about whether his teachers are being committed to teaching in right earnest.

Teachers are the guides, guardians, mentors and makers of their pupils to be properly educated worthy citizens of the country. They, therefore, bear

special onus to discharge their duties with dedication to the betterment of each and every of their pupils. But today's students do not find most them to be so. Many of the teachers nowadays have shifted far from their ideology to be good teachers and instead turned themselves out to be good earners. There is no harm to engage oneself in extra income, but not neglecting or caring little about one's bounden primary duties to one's students at school/college.

Teachers are the beacon light, which will take their pupils to reach their goal. Teachers by their very profession always held in high esteem must embody in themselves a combination of qualities, to be men of head and heart, to be honest and sincere in their ordained profession, to be motivated and guided by the moral obligations to their students, as they do in case of their own children, to educate and groom them to be worthy men/women of the soil.