## The Baily Star Founder-Editor: Late S.M. Ali

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## Welfare Council for EPZ

IN JORKERS' rights have been as close to our VV 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. This paper has never flinched from espousing the legitimate rights of workers to form associations and air their rightful grievances through to the managements. At the same time we are the staunchest critic of and an indefatigable campaigner against labour unions or CBAs running administrations parallel to the managements proper in the name of protecting workers' interests. All they have been after are personal aggrandisement and material acquisition. Throwing work ethics to the four winds is their favourite pasttime as the industry or service organisation they work in are condemned to extinction.

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). The EPZs which hitherto remained sequestered from it to incentivise foreign investment will now see tripartite welfare councils comprising representatives from the management, labour and the Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (BEPZA) at work. The fact that labour representatives will be chosen by the workers themselves, instead of BEPZA, as originally insisted upon in our negotiations with the US side adds substance to workers' representation. Evidently, the contrivance fits in with the 'welfare council' nomenclature of the body being visualised. Another significant element to the arrangement is the provision for tribunal to be headed by a retired justice for the purposes of settling disputes between the management and work ers at the Export Processing Zones.

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 Registra-I tion of Private Schools Ordinance, 1962 is indeed a welcome step. In recent times, private in stitutions offering O and A level courses, and international baccalaureate or equivalent course of foreign universities have sprouted at an unprece dented pace, and the number of students opting for those has also increased manifold. In the dramatically changed scenario, alteration of the 1962 ordinance has been long overdue. We are completely in agreement with the primary objective of the Registration of Private Schools (Amendment Act, 2000 to respond to the prevailing situation. All such schools, not only the ones conferring Junior Cambridge, Cambridge and Scnior Cambridge certificates, definitely need to be brought under the law envisaging a uniform and stricter registration system.

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. And second, it suggests interim approval of a school "following inspection and confirmation of the registration subject to fulfilment of other requirements." These would definitely expedite and make efficient the registration process

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. The government role must not go beyond regulating the registration process and stray into the schools' internal affairs such as the admission procedures, recruitment of teachers, etc. On the contrary, it should play the facilitator to enhance the standard of education at these institutions by way of providing policy, financial and infrastructural support as and when needed. Uniformity in standard could be attained in two ways. Either the lesser schools could be elevated to the level of the good ones or vice versa. We hope the latter is not on anyone's mind.

## 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. The fact of more than two decades in an elective office through consecutive victories at the polls by itself was a rarity, to say nothing of that time period having been distinguished by extraordinary services to the people of West Bengal. In the midst of a global aridity of Maxist governments, Basu's retention of power in the Indian state of West Bengal is a study in political invincibility, or stability in an otherwise volatile region.

Basu's achievements, as a visionary and an administrator, are manifold. He strengthened the role of the panchayet, carried out land reforms and altered the traditional power structure in rural West Bengal which remained his bastion of power for a long time. His initiatives helped raise the living standard of the common people but industrial investment did not pick up to a point where poverty could be sizeably reduced through wider employment.

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. But what was of tremendous significance to Indo-Bangla ties was the role Basu played in the consummation of the Ganges Water Treaty between the too countries.

We wish him good health and his successor Buddhadev Bhattachariya godspeed

Musharraf's Turnabout

OTH India and Pakistan Still, there has to be a settlement. This cannot take place until peace prevails so that all efforts are directed have an understanding to inform each other whentowards finding a solution to satisfy India, Pakistan and the Kashmiris. The longer it takes the three parties to appreciate the realities, the more loss of lives and property they will face. Being a military man, ever they conduct military exercises near the border. But Musharraf should know what hostilities mean. It is unfortunate that he is dragging his feet on a ceasefire.

Islamabad has not done so this time when its nine divisions have been engaged in the operation nothing new. He has said that so from Marala (opposite to Akhnoor many times before. He has been in Kashmir) to the Rann of Kutch also saying that he is willing to talk at any level, at any time and in Gujarat. Defence Minister at any place. But how does it help George Fernandes has not when New Delhi stands commitexpressed any concern because, ted not to hold any dialogue until as he has put it, the forces are not concentrated in one area. Still it the cross-border militancy ends? Musharraf may blame New Delhi is a violation of the understandfor the deadlock. But he knows that there have been efforts to I can think of only one reason bring about a ceasefire. In fact, why this has happened: the the ball is in his court. He has yet absence of any contact between to respond to the proposal that the two countries at any level. both observe a cease-fire for six General Pervez Musharraf, the Chief Executive of Pakistan, months and discuss, during that period, Kashmir and other probmight have felt that there was no

> lems which keep them apart. 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. He told me he would agree to a cease-fire provided India discussed Kashmir.

need to observe even the formal-

ity of sending information when

the two sides are not on speaking

terms. Some individual groups

Track Two Diplomacy are meet-

ing here and there. But all that is

informal. In the absence of any

touch, one government is glower-

ing at the other. This is an omi-

nous development. Things can

worsen. Missions on both sides

are only dotting the i's and cross-

ing the t's. But any move to

reduce their strength such are

the rumours will make relations

still more tenuous. There has to

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

Y all accounts this is the

closest US Presidential

Richard Nixon conceded defeat to

John F Kennedy despite lingering

doubts about Mayor Daley of

Chicago managing a strategic

"switch" of some votes (third

world-style) to the Democratic

candidate. Based on the polls

about popular votes to be cast,

Texas Governor George W Bush

seems to be still ahead, but in the

matter of electoral college votes, it

could well be very, very close. The

US President is chosen not by

adult franchise but by the elec-

toral votes of each State and these

differ according to the popula-

tion. While Bush is expected to

carry most of the States, he is not

expected to win in New York (33

electoral votes) or California (54),

which between them represent

almost 25 per cent of the electoral

votes needed to win. What is very

surprising is that despite the fact

of Bush being the Governor, he

will probably also lose in Florida

(25 votes) and Pennsylvania (23

votes) is too close to call. Bush

may well win in almost 35 of the

52 States (i.e. about 2/3rds) but

could still full short of the 270

electoral votes needed to win the

US Presidency. If colour coding

would be used, the coasts would

be primarily Democratic while the

US heartland solidly Republican.

On the other hand Vice-President

Gore, striving to be his own man

by distancing himself from US

President Bill Clinton, if not from

his achievements as a President,

has major, major problems con-

vincing even the Democratic vote

to turn out. To add to that, Ralph

Nader, standing as an independ-

ent may take away at least 3 per

cent of the votes. In any case

In his article "Expanding

race since 1960 when

"I am exasperated," Musharraf

be a way to establish contacts.

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. His diffidence to put faith in Musharraf, who is reportedly an architect of the Kargil operation, was natural. Still, Vajpayee gave his consent and asked me to go

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. I waited anxiously for word from Islamabad. Former Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral in whom I confided, warned me that

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. Mine was an unofficial effort. How could New Delhi be in the picture when it wanted Pakistan to stop the

cross-border militancy?

## Kuldip Nayar writes from New Delhi

BETWEEN THE LINES

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, 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. He reportedly said that the proposal should come through diplomatic channels.

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-

When I did not hear from Musharraf for more than two months, I wrote a personal letter to him, reminding him of the promise to effect a cease-fire if India agreed to discuss Kashmir. I reiterated Vajpayee's positive Musharraf could be certain that response. The Pakistan Chief Executive did not even acknowledge the letter. And there the matter rests.

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 indi-

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. Whatever the truth, Musharraf's attitude has not been helpful. A straight and blunt person as he is, he should not have agreed to the proposal or should have pursued it to the hilt. Home Minister L.K. Advani, during a TV interview, said the other day that Pakistan would never agree to a ceasefire. I am not so sure. If India would conduct a "meaningful" dialogue on Kashmir, he might accept the proposal. The argument that the army in Pakistan wants to keep the pot boiling is correct up to a point. Sustaining hostility at the present level is costly as well as counterproductive.

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. Over the years, Kashmir has ceased to be a territorial problem. It has become an ideological issue, linked to New Delhi's secular polity.

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. The longer it takes the three parties to appreciate the realities, the more loss of lives and property they will face. Being a military man, Musharraf should know what hostilities mean. It is unfortunate that he is dragging his feet on a ceasefire.

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. It may not come to much because it is the Hurriyat which has a greater say in Kashmir than Farooq's National Conference. But the question is whether Farooq should go when the wedding invitation addresses him as the Chief Minister of "India-occupied Kashmir." I too have received a similar invitation. But it does not cast any aspersions on India.

# 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. Gore is also known to be close to American Pakistanis.

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 Tenessee 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. That is to be expected given the big swings, first for Bush for almost the whole year till his primary campaign skirmish with Senator John McCain brought him down a peg or two and maybe made a better candidate and campaigner out of him. After the Republican Convention he opened up a wide lead over Gore. However Gore came back strongly after the Democratic Convention in August and reversed the lead over Bush, this lasted till the end of September. From Labour Day onwards, Bush has seized the high ground with respect to the popular vote and while most polls have a margin of error of plus/minus 4 per cent, Bush has consistently shown a lead of 3-4 per cent points nationally. In the key states of New York and Cali-

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 qualithe media to project himself as a winner and with this perception influence voter his way? In any case pollsters have not been to explain how Mr Gore led Bush for all of September by a margin of about 7-8 per cent and even into the double digits, which was then reversed to 3-4 per cent in Mr Bush's favour overnight on Labor Day, a swing of nearly 12-15 per

# 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. It could be that seeing the big lead Bush had in the polls, Gore had to do something dramatic, something that would swing the US public mood his way. The Economist published figures recently showing that more than 70 per cent of the US media was supporting Gore, a far cry from the almost equal percentages before Joe Lieberman got on to the ticket. Was this a cynical power play by Gore to use

cent in 24 to 48 hours.

Mr Gore's choice of Lieberman was thus a calculated risk gambling on the fact that the perception created by the media has an enormous leverage over the voter. It may not be enough to ensure a Democratic victory but the fact remains that it has been enough to give Gore a fighting chance. Four days before the election, a 24-year old arrest for "driving under the influence of (DUI) Bush in Maine suddenly popped up. Immediately condemned as a "Dirty Trick" by the Republicans, it was designed to cut into the credibility of the character of George W Bush. Not surprisingly it was immediately pounced upon by some Democratic faithful to try and sway the electorate. On the other hand it also provided a

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. Bush acknowledged it immediately, saying he had made mistakes in his youth and that he had given up drinking completely 14 years ago. The saving grace was the candour and the swiftness with which it was acknowledged, probably just enough "damage control" to sustain Bush's lead.

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. Gore is also known to be close to American Pakistanis like Moeen Gureshi, who is now on his annual "State visit" to Pakistan, but has denied having asked for or been offered the job of PM. Bush also has many Pakistani American friends and traditionally Republicans (Eisenhower, Nixon, Reagan,

Bush; Sr) have been known to favour Pakistan but doing so at the expense of India has never been US policy despite the personal inclinations of Republican US Presidents, Nixon foremost among them. Of course, Democrats have had a love-fest with India starting with Kennedy, going on with Carter and more recently with Clinton. Even then a Bush victory may not necessarily translate into a pro-Pakistan policy, however Pakistanis will probably feel more comfortable and secure with Bush in the White House rather than Gore.

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. Sixty per cent of US citizens believe the economic boom that the Democrats have been taking credit for, has been due to the policies of Republicanappointed Chairman of Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan, rather than because of the present Democratic incumbent of the White House. The economic turnaround started in Oct 92, just before the US Presidential elections was won by Bill Clinton. By the time this write-up appears in print, I could be proved wrong but I am willing to put my money where my mouth is in predicting that by 8 am Pakistan time Wednesday 8 November, George W Bush, Jr will be US Presidentelect for the period 2001-2004.

#### OPINION

# To be a Good Teacher

Horizones Be a Good Teacher, Build a Good Nation" published on the occasion of World Teachers' Day on the 5th October in The Daily Star, Mr M A Bari gave us a good piece to come to. know of the background of World many international conventions nation. 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. In order to recognize their contributions many recommendations were made as to what the should do for the teachers. The UNESCO, therefore, designated focus the teachers' role worldwide. While elaborating their untapped potential of a student rights and privileges and drawing meets the liberating art of a his conclusion Mr Bari reminded teacher, a miracle unfolds". To be our teachers, inter alia, of the frank to our utter dismay, barring responsibilities they must bear a very few, majority of our teachand that they should seek to ers in majority schools/colleges

As an executive of the Bangladesh College/University

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 forming to the standards their profession entail upon them. And Teachers' Day by tracing back the Mr Bari should not have avoided arduous job the UNESCO, from reminding them of their frailties its very inception and later with and of what to follow to be a good

fornia, as well as in Florida, Gore

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". government and the society But that has been made to go with mote their lesson learning. They the wind for good.

achieve the highest possible do not live upto the standards in standards in their professional their professional works, much less meeting their liberating art him in the teacher's private tuithat would unfold a miracle.

Like doctors to their patients, running. Teachers' Association, Mr Bari is the teachers too are supposed to

enrich the students with the faculties they possess and with those in the prescribed books. to, that they are not at all con- They must be taking care and concern about the students and identify the weaknesses they suffer from and take pains to rectify them. That is now not only a far cry, just out of the question. to read out a topic from the beginning to the end while taking class, prepare and put questions to the students to elicit answers from them and thus judge the students' acquisition. That is the method which was used to be pursued years back to develop the faculty of students and prowould not take toils to do that. In his article Mr Bari quoted They do their best to throw proba-5th October as WTD to bring into one Mr Morris, a teacher saying in ble questions for the examinathe Paris convention "when the tions and ask the students to prepare answers from their suggested note books available in the market. Students generally try to be meek before their teachers and have to remain satisfied with this treat of teaching whatsoever. If anyone wants to have a better teaching, he must have to enroll

I found my son as a sophomore get compensation of their study country. They, therefore, bear the observance of the World.

give unremitting attention to in a big private college to keep their students in the class to 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 earthe ILO, took through holding so teacher and to build a good. As we understand they hardly go. Principal remains so busy with their home or coaching centre but not neglecting or caring little ing in right earnest.

about whether the syllabus is complete, if they do it, do it pellown for they would sit for the examination, not the teachers. to resort to long strike to enhance their pay and status, but they are wards look for. never serious about making up the loss to the students' learning

loss, but that is never taken into

In reality the teachers have

preferred to become house tutors. The private tuition and coaching by the school/college teachers nestness and attending such are no different now from other classes were not worth time- business or industry. Beyond spending except for their asking their institutional stints as teachto prepare such and such ques- ers they now produce studentstions for the examination. The for-success in the examination in his varied stints that he has no and earn huge turnover. By time to supervise the teachers or turning their noble profession enquire about whether his teach- into 'business' our teachers ers are being committed to teach- rather have committed violation of the UNESCO charter for them. Many teachers even do not care Saying, however, goes that in the private tuition or coaching centres the students are mostly given mell, and the students are hard prepared notes so as to get put to it to get on with. The through the examinations only school/college remains closed for and no subjectwise comprehenone third of the academic year for sive teaching is provided there. As various reasons, but whether the obviously the students fail to syllabus is completed hardly grasp lessons in the classes they make them concerned. The stu- are compelled to seek, rather dents have to complete it of their lured to the private tuition or coaching. So the standard of teaching in our educational insti-The teachers are very much agile tutions is far from what the UNESCO charter enjoins and our

Teachers are the guides, guardians, mentors and makers tion or coaching the teacher is when their demands are met. The of their pupils to be properly students too have every right to educated worthy citizens of the teachers around the world and

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, 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. There lies the truth of being a good teacher, and playing the role of building a good nation. There also lies the significance of our teachers making common cause with the