LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA TUESDAY JULY 12, 2005

Jalil-Mosharraf mini-consensus

Take it forward through a dialogue

WAMI League General Secretary Abdul Jalil put forward a proposal at the roundtable organised by Prothom Alo on Sunday that AL and BNP should decide against accepting hooligans and possessors of black money into their folds. Health Minister and BNP leader Khondokar Mosharraf Hossain responded positively to the idea. The two leaders have also agreed to discuss Election Commission reforms with a view to ensuring that the next general election is held in a free and fair manner.

By taking a stand on the issue of musclemen and money power holding sway over the major political parties, they have addressed a vital question of politics and election. It's all the more welcome because they have made such a commitment before some reputed members of the civil society. It reflects a correct assessment of the prevailing political situation in the best interest of democracy. But mere utterances will not take us anywhere; actually to be meaningful these will have to be translated into mutually binding commitments at the highest political level of Awami League and BNP.

We have to say this because we have even heard our top political leaders committing themselves to a sane course of politics time and again but to little avail. There was an assurance from the AL while in power that it would not resort to hartal anymore but once in the opposition they have chosen to forget it. Similarly, political parties saw merit in de-linking themselves from student politics but this too has remained a rhetoric. Only last year, AL secretary general Abdul Jalil and his BNP counterpart Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan had vowed not to patronise criminals for attaining petty party objectives. Apparently, the condemnation of rowdyism was unequivocal, but the parties could not, for some reason or the other, live up to it. Goons still rule the

Abdul Jalil and Khondokar Mosharraf Hossain have indirectly acknowledged the truth that their parties have indeed been relying on the services of goons and black money. This itself is a step forward, let alone the agreement in principle to rid the political parties of the two evils. Abdul Jalil and Khondokar Mosharraf Hossain should now make sure that what they have agreed to is followed up through a full-fledged dialogue leading to bipartisan consensus on ways to weed out black money and muscle power from national politics.

HC directive violated

EC failing the test

HE upcoming by-election in Sunamganj-3 was an opportunity for the Election Commission (EC) to demonstrate to a skeptical public that fears of politicisation and manipulation of the election process were unfounded, and that the EC was in a good position to hold fair and free general elections, which are due within the next

The recent HC order directing the EC to require candidates to submit personal information about education, wealth, criminal records, if any, with their filings has not been complied with as far as the approaching by-poll in Sunamgani goes.

We are at a loss to understand why such an obviously desirable measure reflecting a long-felt public demand should remain unimplemented at the first opportunity.

Indeed, the EC's disregard for a HC order may ever tantamount to contempt and is certainly a breach of the public trust. The EC has let down the voters and owes them an explanation.

The directive is simple enough to enforce. The EC need merely demand the requisite information from the candidates before approving their candidacies. If the information provided by a candidate is either incomplete or inadequate, then the election order of 1973 empowers the RO to cancel his or her nomination paper.

However, despite the fact that the information submitted by all nine candidates does not meet the criteria set forth by the HC, not one nomination paper has been cancelled. Not only that, but the EC has taken no steps to disseminate the information to the voters as per the HC order, which is the

The EC must show that it is an independent and strong body. If it cannot, people will assume that it is has no power and that elections held under its auspices will not be credible.

Due to its inaction, the EC has damaged its own credibility. With the general election around the corner this is the last thing we need. The EC must take every opportunity to show to the people that it is capable of administering a fair election that it is free of political interference. Right to information about candidates is an integral part of the right to

Pro-poor growth and pro-growth poor



N common parleys disconcertingly though, the poor are seen to survive with the support of the society. They are destined for doles from exchequer or relief from the rich segment of the society. That the poor could contribute to the growth in different ways and thus could turn out to be an asset for the society is frequently echoed but, perhaps, rarely researched. Just think of the pickers and collectors of wastes in Dhaka city. Their socio economic profile is hardly known to us nor do we attempt to do it. As if they are destined to be pickers. But a thoughtful investigation into the process of marketing of wastes from different corners of the city could reveal that the poor are in fact contributing to not only growth but also in keeping the city

The paper on which I shall heavily draw to drive home the point is titled: "Waste Pickers and Collectors in Delhi: Poverty and Environment in an Urban Informal Sector". Yujiro Hayami, A.K. Dikshit and S.N. Mishra Peeped deep into the poor-growth linkages through a pilot study based on multiple-short surveys. The first thing to note is that pickers and collectors of wastes captured

the concerns as far as contribution to growth and cleanliness is concerned. Secondly, the authors put forth some policy prescriptions that need to be considered to make the poor contribute to

Profile of the poor

In north-east New Delhi, mostly other states are engaged in waste picking and collection -- the bottom points in the system of recyThe large family size could be attributed to the facts that collectors are sons of migrants and living with parents.

Pickers are new migrants and accompany wives and children. However, small differences between these groups are found in terms of housing conditions. Pickers' houses are mainly temporary and made of mud, brick and bamboos while collectors live in permanent pucca houses. Another difference draws attention. The majority of pickers rely solely on their own

happy to say that their earnings in Delhi were twice as high as their earnings in Calcutta. Even taking into account of the cost of living index, the pickers could be in consolation when compared with a living in far flung rural areas. What is, however, hyping is the fact that their poverty is transitory as opportunities are denied to move up the scale as collectors. Unless they move out to some other lucrative options, and be on the heels of lack of skill and knowledge, the chances of coming out

housewives and businessmen. Then after few months, she enters into the job of collector under the regular-supplier contact with dealers. "According to this contract, the dealer lends a rickshaw cart free of charge and gives a cash advance of about Rs.500 to the collector. The dealer also advances emergency-relief credits in the event of the collector's sickness and accident. For the benefits, the collector is obliged to sell all her collections to the

bution to economic wellbeing in the society. First, these generate private incomes to migrants from rural areas, which are considerably higher than the earnings at home in rural areas. Second, their activities increase private incomes of waste producers such as households and informal business establishments. Third, they reduce public costs of disposing wastes for the conservation of city's environment. "If their operations were absent, the waste collected by them would have been thrown away into parks and streets beyond the capacity of the public garbage dumps." The social value added from waste marketing activities, in the period of the survey, in the city of Delhi is estimated to be Rs.3.587 million (US\$ 74 million). Of the total sum. about half was internalised by the traders as their private income, and the rest was externalised to the income of the waste producers and the budget saving of the

BENEATH THE SURFACE

Yujiro Hayami et al note that despite low social status, waste collection and distribution activities are making important contribution to economic wellbeing in the society. First, these generate private incomes to migrants from rural areas, which are considerably higher than the earnings at home in rural areas. Second, their activities increase private incomes of waste producers such as households and informal business establishments. Third, they reduce public costs of disposing wastes for the conservation of city's environment.

cling wastes. It shows that waste collection is a relatively easy occupation for the new migrants from rural areas. Of course, it is much easier to start picking than to start collection as the latter requires some capital and skill. Majority of the pickers are from faraway states like Bihar and West Bengal while the majority of the collectors come from neighbouring Uttar Pradesh. Both pickers and collectors, by 80 to 90 per cent, are illiterate and are equally distributed between Hindus and Muslims. Age composition shows that majority of them are adult males (18 years plus) with an average family size of more than five. This contrasts with that in evidence in Manila, Kathmundu (and possibly Dhaka) where waste picking is done mostly by females and children.

backs but some of them tend to use rickshaw carts to carry the goods in bulks. Collectors regularly use rickshaw carts. The mode of transport differs due to the loads of wastes. Quite obviously, collectors call around corners and hence need carts. The pickers point at piles in a particular place.

Pickers' penny

The average earning of pickers per day is estimated to be Rs.59 which is 40 per cent lower than the minimum wage (Rs.93) per day for casual labourers for municipal works. For collectors, the earning stands at around Rs.118 which is 25 per cent higher than the minimum wage set by the municipality. The authors note that pickers in Delhi are located at the bottom of the income ladder in urban informal sector and their standard of living is pitifully pale. Yet they are

of chronic poverty seems bleak

Sordid segmentation

Here the authors point at social segmentation. The labour markets for nickers and collectors are clearly segmented by ethnicity. As noted before, most collectors come from Uttar Pradesh (UP), whereas pickers pave their ways from remote eastern regions. The old migrants seemingly drive out the new ones as far as higherstatus positions are concerned. Early settlers from UP to northeast Delhi occupied lucrative positions in waste recycling --from collectors to wholesalers. Under such a condition, it is not difficult for a newcomer from UP to jump to the position of collector as she is being briefed by the fellow UF settlers. She gets apprenticeship on how to get garbage from

dealer at about 5 per cent lower than the market price.

The relationship also works as brake on collector's moral hazard in breaching contract. The point of being collectors directly is eased by the community relationships among UP migrants. The migrants from other states are denied the access and hence have to live with chronic poverty. Besides, the occupational ladder is open to collectors for ascending to dealers and, further to wholesalers The mobility upwards demands a lot of money to the tune of no less than Rs.25.000. All these facilities are prevalent among UP commu-

Pro-growth poor

Yujiro Hayami et al note that despite low social status, waste collection and distribution activities are making important contri-

Police and poor

city administration

Improvement in sanitary conditions in slums and provisions for basic utilities such as pure drinking water, electricity, sewage disposal system could draw attention. That would reduce day-losses due to sickness. Pickers could be trained with simple processing activities pertaining to wastes through public support programmes. The last but not the least is "stopping policemen's extortion and public dump caretakers' money demands for picking in their "territories"". By the pickers, this was rated as more important than supply of public health and education services!

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Test status on trial?

MEGASTHENES

AKISTAN'S first captain in Test cricket was AH Kardar. He was a genuine all-rounder who batted and bowled left-handed; an Oxford blue, who later played briefly for Warwickshire in county cricket. He was good enough to be selected for the Gentlemen vs Players match of 1949. Kardar never quite realised his potential as a player -- his figures in Tests are nodest at best. Test matches in the 1950s, when Kardar played his cricket, were few and far between. He did play a few sparkling innings in his time, but it was as a bowler that he had perhaps greater potential. Tom Graveney, one of the finest post-War batsmen to play for England, made a generous reference to his bowling skills in one of his books. As captain, Kardar may have tended to under-bowl himself His greatest contribution to Pakistan cricket was as captain. He led a fledgling, unweaned team and set it firmly along the path to maturity by the time he called it a day. Pakistan achieved its first Test

victory in only its second official Test match, against India in 1952. It lost the 5 Test rubber narrowly by a margin of 2-1. Kardar then led the babes of cricket to England where Pakistan drew the series 1-1. Pakistan's victory at the Oval in the 4th and final Test made cricket history of sorts; no other team had won a Test match on its first tour of England. Pakistan. of course. was not the equal of England in the true sense. At Kennington Oval it enioved a generous slice of beginner's luck. Rain came at the opportune time early in England's first innings and the state of the pitch after rain was tailor made for the fast medium swing bowling and deadly cutters of Fazal Mahmood, Pakistan's main strike bowler. As a bowler Fazal was of the mould of Bedser and Tate. An England team, with a longish tail, simply could not cope with him in their second innings either, when the wicket was plumb. It was a fully deserved victory, against a team that included Hutton, Compton, May, Graveney, Evans, Statham and Tyson.

Kardar led Pakistan on three overseas tours, to India in 1952-53, England in 1954 and the West

Indies in 1957-58. He had the happy habit of writing a book at the end of each tour. Pakistan did not win any of these Test series but was not disgraced either. Pakistan's record in Tests played at that time on home ground was better. This may be attributable to three factors: First, the psychological factor of playing before a supportive home crowd Secondly, Pakistan persevered with matting wickets, when every other country had turned to turf, almost certainly because matting afforded congenial conditions for its one genuine match-winning bowler,

on that tour. Perhaps they had a point. The fact remains though that appreciable differences between Test playing countries have always existed and have often enough been the subject of both debate and unkind ridicule. New Zealand played its first Test in 1929-30 and won its first Test only in 1955-56 against the West Indies, in its 45th Test. In 1932-33 Walter Hammond, an outstanding player then at the peak of his powers, scored 227 and 336 not out in two Tests against New Zealand. New Zealand in reply scored 223 and 35 for no loss, and 158 and 16 for no

resumption of the Ashes series that was to follow. The locust-eaten War years would have taken their toll of even the great man's phenomenal prowess and resources. His absence did not materially affect the outcome of the match, which Australia won with ease by an innings within two days. It did mean though that Bradman never played against New Zealand in his entire

India toured England in 1952 for a four Test rubber and next in 1959. It lost both series, by margins of 3-0 and 5-0 respectively. In the third Test

India and Pakistan were difficult admittedly vital elements. Cricket to beat on home ground. They still has to do with endurance, stamina, are. Both, however, performed mental strength and, of course, ridiculously below par or potential basic skills, all of which need at abroad. Pakistan incidentally did not times to be laced with liberal qualify automatically for Test status infusions of luck. There has been after partition. It drew an unofficial the occasional outstanding Test with the West Indies in 1948, ndividual performance from lost the sole unofficial Test with a Bangladesh in contests with other Commonwealth side in 1949, and in sides. This is assuredly welcome 1951 won a two match unofficial and augurs well for the future. series with a visiting MCC team, 1-0. The MCC team was without its top players but was good enough to draw an official five Test rubber with India at 1-1. India's victory in the 5th

As a team though Bangladesh is not vet equipped to compete credibly with the better teams, especially in Tests. To improve -- the experience of others would suggest -- Bangladesh must continue to compete with established teams. On the other hand, wholly lopsided contests cannot be good for the game, nor can it afford much by way of entertainment or pleasure to the spectator. There is also the possibility that the game's records. almost sacrosanct to innumerable aficionados of cricket, may be devalued. Hammond's feats against New Zealand in 1932-3 come readily to mind. What is needed is a delicate balance between concerns that do not pull in the same direction. In Bangladesh there are great expectations of coach Day Whatmore In the coming months and years he desperately needs to hone the team's talents and produce match-winning bowlers. Certainly this will call for sustained effort and application from his team. Whatmore performed a miracle of sorts when he guided Sri Lanka to victory in the World Cup. A second such miracle for Bangadesh is

what is much needed now. Fazal Mahmood, who featured prominently in every one of Pakistan's early victories, passed away recently. Not long before Fazál's death, Omar Qureshi also passed on. He, alongside Jamshed Marker, Pearson Sureta, Vizzy, Devrajpuri and Berry Sarbhadikari among others, did much, through ball-to-ball, live commentary on Test matches over radio, to bring cricket to the homes of countless cricket lovers in the sub-continent. This was at a time when coverage of the game by television, or for that matter television itself in the sub-continent was still some time in the future Both Fazal and Omar Qureshi gave much to the game they loved. May the earth rest lightly upon them.

LIGHTEN UP

The predicament of Bangladesh cricket at this time is not too different from the harrowing experiences of India, Pakistan, New Zealand or even the West Indies in their early years in the game. In Bangladesh there are great expectations of coach Dav Whatmore. In the coming months and years he desperately needs to hone the team's talents and produce match-winning bowlers. Certainly this will call for sustained effort and application from his team. Whatmore performed a miracle of sorts when he guided Sri Lanka to victory in the World Cup. A second such miracle for Bangadesh is what is much needed now.

Fazal. The persistence with matting, however, probably also impeded Pakistan's progress to the higher echelons of the game. And thirdly, it has been alleged, mainly by some visiting players, that Pakistan invariably received the benefit of close, or even not so close, umpiring decisions. That was before the era of neutral umpires and instant television replays. Similar grumbles were heard about India, the West Indies. England and Australia as well. This led eventually to the nstitution of neutral umpires at the highest levels of the game. Umpiring errors, of course, have not been eliminated but this particular aspect of luck in cricket has been appreciably reduced. Paradoxically it is the more vulnerable or weaker teams that seem to suffer more often from dubious decisions.

Kardar's book on the England tour was titled "Test Status on Trial" Kardar himself, and possibly others, may have felt that Pakistan proved itself fully deserving of Test status only after defeating England in a Test

wicket. Both matches were drawn. Hammond averaged an incredible 563 for the series, a world record. He also broke Bradman's then record of the highest individual Test innings of 334 against England in 1930. Without detracting from Hammond's feat, no one then or later was prepared to place his 336n.o. on a par with . Bradman's earlier feat.

New Zealand did in those times produce the outstanding individual player, like Martin Donnelly, but as a team could not compete with the best. On its England tour in 1949, New Zealand was given a series of four 3-day Tests. Though nowhere near England as a team, New Zealand was good enough to draw all 4 Tests. A fitting response, I suppose, to what was certainly perceived as a slight. Australia never played New Zealand at the Test level until 1945-6 and even that one match rubber was accorded Test status only retrospectively in 1948. Bradman opted out of that rubber, concentrating instead on regaining full match fitness for the

in one day. Pakistan, in its second tour of England in 1962 did not perform much better; it lost the 5 match rubber, 4-0. Such grotesquely lopsided matches provoked both acid comments and genuine concern. One suggestion mooted was for weaker sides to play only 3-day Test matches on tours to England. A more biting observation was an invitation to the MCC to make the logo of the England team's cap variable, the traditional three lions for matches with Australia, two lions for matches against South Africa and the West Indies, and for games with others, a pussy cat!

in 1952. India was bowled out twice

It is an axiom of cricket that matches are won by bowlers and not batsmen. Cricket in Pakistan began to mature, somewhat belatedly, after it had switched to turl in domestic games, after it began to produce match winning bowlers and after a number of their top players began playing county cricket in England, when rules for overseas players were relaxed.

Test was its first in an official Test, in its 25th Test match, 20 years after achieving Test status. It was after the victory over MCC that Pakistan became a full member of the ICC and received Test status, which came with membership.

The predicament of Bangladesh cricket at this time is not too different from the harrowing experiences of India, Pakistan, New Zealand or even the West Indies in their early years in the game. Bangladesh in its five years of Test cricket and after close to 40 official Tests, has won only once, and that too against a depleted Zimbabwe XI. There is an excess of Test cricket today, which brings out in sharp relief Bangladesh's discomfiture. Perhaps cricket in Bangladesh would have been better served if the country had achieved Test status via the strenuous route of success in unofficial Tests. In Bangladesh the talent is there, the promise is there, and for sheer enthusiasm the country is second to none. There is, however, more to cricket than these

EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR

million people glued to the TV set

TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE

Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

A sad experience

I went to Dhaka University for getting a recommendation letter from one of my ex-teachers for fulfilment of a requirement of a scholarship in a South Asian country. But as ill luck would have it, I had very little time in hand as I got the letter of the ministry of establishment rather late. All of a sudden, I saw one of my favourite teachers in his room. In spite of being his student both at the Honours and Masters level, I had to reintroduce myself as one of his exstudents. Finally, he allowed me to enter into his room. After my entrance when I informed him of my intention to meet with him he seemed to be extremely annoyed and threw a question towards me, which was surprising. He asked me how I dared enter into his room as according to him a third class magistrate was guarding his room at that

me. Although I am a first class magistrate I had to tolerate his derisive remarks and control my temper with utmost patience, as he was my respected teacher. Eating humble pie of all those insulting and satirical words I sat there for quite a long time in the hope of getting his recommendation because I had only some hours in hand for submitting the form to the ERD. After whiling away some valuable moments he diverted his discussion to another matter. He asked me whether I could give any piece of khas land to him. When I replied in the negative he pointed his finger to a junior teacher of another department. My respected teacher then asked him whether he required any land and if so then he should communicate with me. At last he refused to give me the recommendation, as he was too busy on that day

time. In fact, he was having fun with

My question is, can't they be a little more generous? Md. Ashabuzzaman AC (land), Barisal

Dr. David Cheesman Welcome to Bangladesh Dr.

David Cheesman! Welcome! In response to your letter dated July the 10 in The Daily Star, I would like to put some points to ponder.

In recent years terrorism is the matter of greatest concern in the world. Who doesn't know how much devastation was made on the 9/11 in the US? But n my opinion, it will be a great mistake if you put all the responsibilities on the shoulder of Bin-Laden or any other al-Qaeda or terrorist Muslim groups. The question to ponder is who or what made them so? Why there have been so much red-alert in some counties and not in others? If we call Hitler of Nazi Germany and Mussolini of Italy dictators and terrorists, what will we call a modern Bush? Why did the British people allow (we respectfully refer to the age-old British democracy and strong public opinion) their Prime Minister to join and support the US which has the record of carrying on random interference, attacks, killings in several countries like long 18 years of war in Vietnam, Korea etc and now in Iraq? Why do they poke their nose in the developing countries on the pretext of giving aid, which are less aid and more interference? Why in the name of globalisation arms, scrap and banned goods are being exported to these countries? appreciate, Dr David, the alms

By the way, we the Bangladeshis have a long tradition of communal harmony. Thank you very much, I welcome you again in Bangla-Ashfia. Dhaka

given by you for the flood victims.

A miracle?

Sometimes you can't help but feel the oppression of the decadence that looms beneath the surface of our daily lives. Some are positively a result of warped souls' depravity while some are 'gifted' to us. I talk about the total halt that our lives seem to come to, every now and then, (more often now than then). Between the floods and hartals and political uproars, the corruption that has now vitiated the core of our existence and the total lack of honesty and integrity amongst every other

go? What are we all to do? This is nothing more than an expression of despair and frustration that waits patiently like a creeping predator, ready to pounce on us

I don't see any future for our country, let alone a bright one. We are selling our country, selling our souls....what's next? But I will say this much that only in Bangladesh can you truly feel the blessing of miracles... how? well isn't it a miracle that amidst such chaos and corruption and dishonest practices, an apparently dysfunctional country still functions? Zeenat Gulshan, Dhaka

Why call it an upset?

Keeping one hundred and forty

for a superb show of batting, bowling and fielding, our cricket team defeated the Aussies--the invincible! After this glorious victory, as usual, everyone including cricket analysts, commentators and cricketers have started labelling this victory as an upset. Ricky Ponting, the skipper of the Australian team, said to the journalists that it was one of the biggest upsets that ever happened in the cricket world. However, I strongly disagree with him. I do not think that it was an upset at all. If we call it an upset, we are certainly undermining the all-out efforts of our cricketers that they made to achieve this victory. In other words, by calling it an 'upset', we are making our cricketers less confident than they should be. Upsets do not occur every day. So our cricketers needed to

believe that it was not an upset, rather it was possible they outplayed the because Australians in every department. They ought to realise that they have enough potential and they are competent enough to defeat any cricket playing nation. Bangladesh are not new in this cricket world. Now it is time for us to show what we have learned so In conclusion, I would like to

say that it may be called a 'Big Surprise' or a great 'Comeback since our cricketers have not been in their form for quite a long time. Now it is their duty to keep up the show and make us proud They may not win the next match but I hope they will fight like real

Mehedi Kayser Pabitra Motijheel A. G.B. Colony, Dhaka