The Daily Star **EDITORIAL**



FOUNDER EDITOR LATE S. M. ALI

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Sushma Swaraj's Dhaka visit

Augurs well for bilateral ties

THE Dhaka visit by Sushma Swaraj as external affairs minister of the one month old BJP-led government in New Delhi has gone down well with observers in Bangladesh. The importance the new government of India attaches to Bangladesh has been amply illustrated by its choice of Dhaka as the first destination of diplomatic engagement after Thimpu.

The outcome of her visit can be seen in two parts -- one, it has provided an impetus to break new grounds in the areas of economic and trade cooperation, and two, India wishes to contribute to the infrastructure building processes in Bangladesh as well as in the region. In specific terms, India wants to continue in its efforts to bring down border killings to zero level; create a relaxed visa regime for under 13 and above 65-year-old persons; initiate Dhaka-Shillong-Gowahati bus service on an experimental basis and allow import to Bangladesh of 100 MW electricity from Palatana plant in Tripura in India

On the outstanding issues of Teesta Water Sharing Treaty and ratification of the land boundary agreement, Sushma Swaraj has assured Bangladesh of a vigorous consensus building process among political parties in India.

In the end, one gets the impression that her meetings with different political leaders in Bangladesh have been in the best tradition of India's democratic culture. The emphasis on people to people relation augurs well for reinforcing closer ties between the two neighbours.

Rajshahi govt college shows integrity

Refuses to cave in to vandalism

UR staff correspondent's report from Rajshahi on Wednesday regarding an attempted but aborted enrolment of some BCL-chosen candidates to higher secondary level at Rajshahi Govt. College was not certainly run-of-the-mill type. This is because the college authority held its ground making sure that students who met the admission tests criterion only succeeded in enrolling themselves at the college.

The 'outsiders', some 20 odd activists of BCL did not rest content with pressing an unfair demand on the college authority only, they went so far as vandalizing the furniture of the auditorium to force admission of their favourites to humanities and science sections. But this was resisted by the principal of the college who successfully 'completed the admission process' and strictly following the merit lists did he provide berths to the deserving admission-seekers.

Clearly, the college authority by holding its ground has set an example of courageously defending integrity of an institution having to do with educating future generations and infusing the right values in them. We cannot allow our educational standards to have a free fall due to any form of abuse of power.

Whilst heads of educational institutes fulfill their remit, local administration and political party leaders, particularly the local influentials, must help them do it. Meanwhile, the police case that has been filed should be brought to its logical conclusion.

A courageous act

SHAKHAWAT LITON

HE people of Narayanganj had demonstrated immense courage by staging huge protests against the recent gruesome seven-murder there. The mighty vested quarter could not silence their voices. Their protest sparked a ray of hope in people's minds elsewhere in the country. It appeared to have shaken the powerbase of the Osman family. It also sent a message to the people that Selim Osman might be defeated in the parliamentary by-polls through bal-

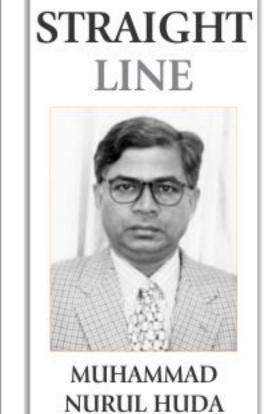
But Thursday's election result proved otherwise. The Osman brothers and their supporters effectively manipulated the battle of ballots. Supporters and campaigners of Selim Osman allegedly cast fake votes and stuffed ballot boxes in some polling stations. They staged showdown in front of most of the 141 polling stations and stayed there until the polling ended, creating a sense of panic among voters. They obstructed voters who they considered loyal to the rival camp and also allegedly drove away the main opponent's polling agents from at least seven polling stations. People seemed to have succumbed to the intimidation. The law enforcement agencies also failed to ensure an atmosphere conducive to free and fair polling. The outcome was a low turnout of voters, which put a question mark on the result.

Yet, there is a courageous instance. Assistant Superintendent of Police of Narayanganj Bashiruddin has set an example by bravely fighting the threat of ruling Awami League MP Shamim Osman. Shamim, brother of Selim, allegedly intimidated ASP Bashir as he foiled a bid to capture a polling station by Shamim's followers. Bashir also called his superior officer to arrest the miscreants, which annoyed Shamim. The AL MP made a phone call to Bashir. "Why did you call them [his superior and reinforcements]? Please leave the centre. It will be 4:00pm soon [polls closing] and at least 70% to 80% votes must be cast. Give him [Salam, who led Shamim's men to capture the polling station] a clearance to do what he wants," the ASP quoted Shamim as saying. "He [Shamim] verbally abused and threatened me when I refused to oblige," Bashir said. He filed a general diary

in this connection. What Shamim Osman did was a serious offence. But what Bashir did was a courageous thing. His action proves there are honest and courageous officers in the police administration though it has been politicised. It has brightened the image of the police to some extent. The police administration must stand by him to thwart any unfair move against him. He deserves a salute.

The writer is Senior Reporter, The Daily Star.

Influencing law enforcement



stated about the allegation of politicisation of the police force of the country. In fact, both front page lead news and the comments in the editorial in the print media clearly portray the nation's concern about the negative effects of such alleged blatant politicisation on our body politic. In their justified anguish the media has sought the intervention of the chief executive of the country to

longer guarded and under-

stem the rot and take corrective measures before the nation finds itself in an ungovernable scenario.

The ground reality is that the ruling parties in our situation, in their misplaced exuberance, forget that the police was the dominant visible symbol of repressive imperial alien power and that de-colonisation requires large-scale behavioural and attitudinal changes of the political masters and the public servants belonging to this vital organ of the state. Thus, while admonitions from the pulpit come in plenty for desired behaviour on the part of enforcement officials, in reality, unhealthy pressures are regularly exerted to carry out the wishes of the ruling coterie in the most expeditious manner. It is the continuance of such regressive mentality that has brought us to the present lamentable scenario wherein the police outfit has been described as an appendage of the political government. Nothing could be more sad and frustrating than that.

If we want to get out of the aforementioned undesirable situation, we have to take quick action to repair our badly bruised democratic credentials. First of all, the police needs to be insulated from political executive and other interferences in promotions, postings and security of tenure. The people must not get an impression that the investigation agencies are very efficient while taking the required action against those not in power, and that their edge is blunted against those in power. If police act impartially, credibility would be restored to the investigative authorities. This is very important because as long as the impression persists that a policeman is not an unbiased friend of the people, the concept of an orderly society cannot not be materialised.

The reality is that the police continue to be the principal investigating agency for the State under the criminal procedure code in addition to being the primary outfit responsible for prevention of crime. They should, therefore, strive hard for upholding the constitutional objective of protection of an individual's dignity and civic rights. Since justice is the ensuring of civil liberties it is only proper that the police truly become its protector and defender.

A politicised police force will not be able to ensure a sense of security in the community and will not succeed in enlisting the cooperation and participation of people in crime prevention programmes. Similarly, the so-called political appointees may not appreciate that The writer is a columnist of The Daily Star.

T is indeed sad to note that their job is not to encroach upon the rights and liberty the media reports are no of the individual and the premonition is that they may look upon themselves as mere pawns in the hands of governing elite. They cannot be expected to be accountable to the real sovereign, the people. Such policemen will inevitably compromise the dignity of the individual citizen. In such a scenario, democracy will gather deficits at our peril.

> There are credible fears that the police image in Bangladesh will suffer a grave damage if politicisation continues unabated. We already have the unfortunate spectacle of a police service in whose investigative fairness the major opposition political parties and a sizable section of the civil society entertain grave doubt. Criminal cases relating to victims of diabolical and dismal murders that are considered as acts of political vendetta are not investigated properly, according to the versions of complainants and relations. There are persistently vociferous demands to arrange for proper investigation of sensational cases by external agencies, including international organisations. Without doubt, such appeals and petitioning indicate the deep distrust of the impartiality of the State's investigative apparatus. No sensible Bangladeshi would feel at ease in such an unsettling environment.

As long as the policing function comprising detection of crime and prosecution of criminals remains under the control of the executive it may not be easy to bring about a reduction in unjust political interference in police functions.

It must be appreciated very clearly that the regulatory functions of the State like maintenance and preservation of public order and investigation of criminal cases cannot be arrogated to private bodies. These functions cannot be performed through contractual arrangements either. Only persons with solemnly sworn loyalty to the State who have been examined, selected and verified in a constitutional process are expected to conscientiously perform the onerous responsibilities without profit motive.

It is the considered view of many that as long as the policing function comprising detection of crime and prosecution of criminals remains under the control of the executive it may not be easy to bring about a reduction in unjust political interference in police functions. The well-grounded fear is that the undesirable subordination of the investigative police to the executive breeds a cynicism that corrodes all positive cultural values. The investigating organ needs autonomy and constitutional protection made possible through radical conceptual and structural changes. Tinkering with the issue will not help.

Income inequality and youth unemployment



versial book Capital in the Twenty-First Century topping several bestseller lists, income inequality -- which has been on the rise since the 1970s -- is once again capturing global attention. Debate surrounding the subject has covered many of the trend's repercussions, including decreased

social cohesion, growing slums, exploitation of labour, and weakened middle classes. But one effect has received relatively little attention: youth unemployment and underemployment.

Since the global economic crisis, youth unemployment has soared worldwide. In the developed world, 18% of people aged 16-24 are jobless. While the youth unemployment rate in Germany remains a relatively low 9%, it stands at 16% in the United States, 20% in the United Kingdom, and above 50% in Spain and Greece. The Middle East and North Africa also have very high youthunemployment rates, estimated at 28% and 24%, respectively. By contrast, only 10% of young people in East Asia, and 9% in South Asia, are unemployed.

But policymakers have done relatively little to address the problem. The world now risks creating what the International Labor Organization has called a "lost generation," with global youth unemployment expected to reach 13% by 2018.

There is no single factor driving this trend. In China, for example, youth unemployment is rooted in the dominance of the manufacturing sector, which provides far more job opportunities for high-school graduates than university-educated workers.

Youth unemployment can also stem from a market mismatch. In a recent survey of nine European Union countries, 72% of the educators who responded reported that new graduates are qualified to meet prospective employers' needs, though 43% of employers reported that candidates do not possess the required skills.

But, whatever the main factor underpinning high youth unemployment, income inequality undoubtedly exacerbates the problem. Simply put, many jobs -- particularly the most lucrative ones -- are available almost exclusively to young people from wealthy backgrounds.

In the UK, for example, only 7% of children attend private schools. But roughly half of the country's chief executives, and two-thirds of its doctors, have been privately educated. This trend is expected to persist, with the next generation of doctors likely to be born into families that rank among the wealthiest 20% of the population.

There are several possible reasons for this pattern. For starters, the highest-status positions require the most prestigious educational background -- and that costs money. Moreover, many internships -- a prerequisite for the most attractive jobs -- are unpaid, making them unfeasible for graduates whose families cannot afford to support them.

But money is not the only requirement. In many cases, sought-after jobs and internships -- and even admission to top educational institutions -- are far more accessible to those who are within the employers'

personal or professional network. When the job market rewards whom you know more than what you know, young people with well-connected parents have an obvious advantage.

Inherently biased recruitment and hiring practices exacerbate this inequality further. While companies may, in theory, recognise the value of bringing together talent from a variety of backgrounds, they tend to recruit candidates with a familiar set of skills, experiences, and qualifications. Even if someone with a different educational background or work experience manages to get face time with those responsible for hiring, they must overcome the perception that they are a riskier choice.

The fact that academic results are among the top hiring criteria skews outcomes further. People who had the privilege of receiving private education are likely to have attended more reputable universities. The small proportion of students from poorer backgrounds who manage to gain admission and secure scholarships to top institutions often have lower grades, especially toward the beginning of their university education, owing to their inferior preparation.

In fact, financial constraints prevent many capable students from attending any university at all, owing to their need to earn an income that only full-time employment can provide. As a result, their earning capacity is severely constrained, regardless of their talent

The good news is that efforts to alleviate youth unemployment will reduce income inequality, and vice versa. The society that emerges will be more stable, unified, and prosperous -- an outcome in which everyone, rich or poor, has a stake.

or work ethic.

In order to create a level playing field, employers should re-think their recruitment strategies and consider applicants based on a broader range of criteria. Businesses can only benefit from the fresh perspectives that a more diverse candidate pool offers.

With financial status serving as the key determinant of opportunities, young people from poorer backgrounds are becoming increasingly discouraged -- a situation that can lead to social unrest. Unless all young people have legitimate prospects of improving their social and economic status, the gap between rich and poor will continue to widen, creating a vicious cycle that will be increasingly difficult to escape.

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TO THE EDITOR

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Not the right time for cricket

As it is monsoon now, rain hampered the recent cricket match between Bangladesh and India. This India-Bangladesh series is taking place at a time when everybody is busy with the World Cup Football. So, cricket is not getting enough attention right at this moment. This series could be arranged before the World Cup Football started. Timing is very important for all types of sports. We should take lesson from this hodgepodge situation and make better arrangements the next time.

Shafkat Rahman

New Eskaton, Dhaka

BIAM Laboratory School

Corruption institutionalised

The physical assault of a woman by a Biman official, for her refusal to give extra money for ticket, has showed us the rotten picture of our public offices. Biman bears losses year after year for these types of personnel. They put our national flag carrier to shame. The audacity of that staff has neither made him brave nor a good human, but rather confirmed him as a shameless and dishonest person. Corruption has been institutionalised in most of the government offices, and Biman is no exception. Md. Nahid Iftekhar

Muradpur, Chittagong

Battery-run vehicles for physically challenged people

The other day I saw a man pedalling a rickshaw with only one leg he had. After dropping off a passenger, he stopped near my house. I asked him why he was doing this. He broke down in tears and said he had no other way to feed his family.

I felt sorry for him, but at the same time, I admired him for doing such hard job instead of begging. It would be a lot easier for him and countless other disabled people to work, if batteryoperated vehicles were legalised. I hope the government would think seriously about this and come up with a solution as soon as possible.

Aminur Rahim New DOHS, Mohakhali

Dhaka

Comments on news report, "Huji grew up in BNP's care," published on June 24, 2014

Hardreality

It is a shame for BNP that they actively aided and abetted terrorist activities, which led to death of many innocent people. BNP'S alliance with Jamaat clearly demonstrates that this party (BNP) has no ideology at all.

Hafeejul Alam

The people at large condemn BNP's connection with Huji. But what about AL's menacing governance? It's really unfortunate for the people of Bangladesh that they have to choose either the frying pan or the open fire! For Bangladesh, committed and percipient leadership is still a far cry.

Mortuza Huq

To write something like this from the statement of Mufti Hannan alone... and no backed up evidences... does not carry any weight. This should not have been cleared through the editorial scrutiny of a reputable media like the Daily Star.

"Commuters suffer for AL's rally" (June 24, 2014)

Barkat

Under the slogan of Joy Bangla and Joy Bangabandhu, the AL gives every drop of pain and suffering it can to the people of Bangladesh. They loot, they plunder and they even kill, all under the slogan of Joy Bangla.

Abul Kashem

Such irresponsible activities by the AL leadership!

Hardreality

Every time AL celebrates something, greet PM or any other leader, they make people suffer. Our leaders are so unaware of the ground realities that they never think twice about the consequences of their action. Still they demand that they are working for general people. What an irony!

"No dialogue with BNP" (June 24, 2014)

Molla A. Latif

"Sit for dialogue or face hartal" is the threat from BNP. The question is who will sit for dialogue and who will face their hartal? Hartal burns people and properties. Hartal damages economy. Hartal fells trees and cuts roads. Hartal brings immense sufferings and losses to the people and not to AL. Both AL and BNP claim themselves as people's parties, but none cares about people.

"It was so easy to kill people" (June 24, 2014)

Molla A. Latif

And it is so difficult to punish the killers. The innocents banished but the criminals survived for long.

Snr Citizen

Is it any difficult today? People are getting killed, either by road accidents or suicides and/or by killers. Greed and disrespect for human lives are the two most shocking qualities we have achieved.