

It's reigning men, hallelujah!



THE SOUND & THE FURY
SUSHMITA S. PREETHA

IN the land of the free, it is only fair that students should be free to do as they wish. They should be free to occupy seats in halls and terrorise others who do not subscribe to their warped worldview; free to not show up in class, even though their education is being heavily subsidised by our taxpayers and even though there are hundreds of thousands who would have given anything to be in their place; free to harass, threaten, assault, rape or abduct whoever they want, whenever they want, without any repercussions beyond a light slap on the wrist (if that); free to 'terrorise' in the name of 'activism'; free to shamelessly put to shame a long and rich history of students' activism in the country; free, really, to eschew values of peace, justice, democracy and solidarity -- ideals that this country was founded on -- for the ruthless pursuit of power.

and turning the campus into a battlefield to decide who will reign over it. These cadres appear to think that violence against women is in their job description, perpetrating rape and sexual assaults with almost complete impunity. One only needs to refer to Jahangirnagar's infamous "Century" Manik -- a Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leader, who openly bragged about his 100+ rapes, but was never punished, despite a strong movement against rape by students and teachers -- to drive home the point.

With complete control of BCL in most campuses, its cadres have become more fearless than ever. Most have the unspoken blessings of the administration. This month alone, they have beaten up aspiring candidates protesting the DU's decision to disallow them from appearing twice in the entrance examinations, in broad daylight. Not only was no action taken against such hooliganism, but the university administration all but defended their actions by stating that the protestors causing havoc were being funded by outsiders. Rumour has it that

can be summarised by a casual if cocky comment made to me by a BCL sympathiser -- "Write as much as you like, but no one can touch BCL men now!"

It seems that even complete control over the campus is not enough to stop BCL from disrupting the educational activities of universities. Since the January 5 elections, the competition for resources, prestige and power has led to unparalleled level of in-fighting within AL. Two groups of BCL are now fighting for dominance in Chittagong University, holding the whole student body hostage with strikes and internal violence. The situation is so out-of-control that the flustered university and local administration is resorting to the help of political leaders, including the prime minister herself, to rein them in and bring peace back to campus.

It goes without saying that bipartisan teachers and administrators themselves have encouraged and buttressed the terrorist activities of the different cadre groups. It is also true that the hooliganism of student wings has been institutionalised and naturalised to such an extent that a student is forced to pay homage to ruling cadres if he to succeed, or at any rate, survive, within the campus; in other words, the terrorising politics and practices of student wings have been given structural validity by subsequent governments and administrations.

Student activism is vital to any educational institution; universities should be the hotbed for intellectual and ethical debates, progressive politics and egalitarian practices. Although leftist and progressive student activists struggle on a daily basis to highlight and challenge injustices within and outside the institution, their good work is overshadowed by the destructive activities of cadres. In most instances, the cadres deliberately condemn progressive student politics and disallow democratic practices within the institutions, as is obvious from the fact that there has been no Dhaka University Central Students' Union (DUCSU) election for over two decades.

A student wing is supposed to engage in students' issues, but our student activists are there to carry out the indispensable dirty work of the political parties, from providing people at mass rallies to taking over people's movements like Ganajagoron Mancha. They have never had the students' best interests at heart; rather, they have systematically exploited the university, its resources and its students to further the political interests of their parties. It would be nothing less than naïve to expect them to practice democratic values when their very existence rests on their autocratic, terrorist nature.

They have exercised unbridled power for decades now, influencing everything from getting a dorm bed to enrolling in a decent course.

the administration itself approached BCL to rid it of the trouble caused by the protestors. The administration's apathetic attitude to the attack on Beg and his family also raises eyebrows. Why did the provost fail to stop unruly dissenting students at the Shaheed Minar? Why was the VC so conspicuously absent from a protest to save DU from terrorism? Why did the provost defend the BCL cadres in a talk-show by asking if Beg and his family were doing *oshalin* (vulgar) things?

It has long been established that members of reigning student wings are exempt from serious administrative and criminal punishment. Most cases of violence by BCL members go unreported, but among the 21 cases that were filed against them in Shahabganj Thana over the past one year, not even one case was investigated. According to a Bengali daily, 13 BCL men indicted for the killing of Biswajit Das, two of whom received death sentence, have still not been arrested by the police, despite reports that they can be spotted in Jagannath University campus. The impunity enjoyed by BCL cadres

APEC SUMMIT Choosing between FTAAP and TPP

MAHMOOD HASAN

APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) members account for nearly 40% of the world population, approximately 57% of world GDP and about 48% of world trade.

The theme for the Beijing meeting was -- "Shaping the Future through Asia-Pacific Partnership". The summit focused on three major topics -- advancing regional economic integration; promoting innovative development, reform and economic growth; and comprehensive strengthening development in infrastructure and connectivity. High on the agenda of this meeting was the Chinese proposal to launch a study on "Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific" (FTAAP). The summit held from (9-11 November) adopted the proposal, with some changes in the wording of the plan.

There is a disagreement between China and US over the concept of free trade in Asia-Pacific region. The Americans have been backing another proposal titled Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) currently being discussed by 12 countries, with the conspicuous exclusion of China. The TPP is considered the backbone of President Barack Obama's "rebalance" or "pivot" to Asia. It is seen as an attempt to thwart China's rise in the Pacific region. TPP has both economic elements and security components (meaning larger US military presence in the region).

Washington's TPP plan had provoked Beijing to flex its maritime muscle in the East and South China Seas over the past couple of years. Interestingly, TPP is not attractive to several leaders because it is dominated by US and smaller developing economies seem wary about its benefits.

The Chinese FTAAP plan, some say, was put forward to divert attention from the TPP. Washington continues to push the TPP and reportedly tried to block the Chinese plan. At the Ministerial meeting the American delegation however, succeeded in changing wordings of the FTAAP concept. The Ministers agreed to launch a "strategic study" from the Chinese call for "feasibility study". There is however no mention when the study will be completed or when FTAAP will be come into being.

On 11 November at the press conference President Xi Jinping announced that the Final Declaration was adopted with "extensive and important" consensus. The leaders have endorsed the Chinese plan and roadmap for FIAAP. There is no mention of TPP. The leaders have decided to advance the FIAAP "in a comprehensive and systematic manner".

President Obama's visit to Beijing (10-12 Nov) was raised to the level of a state visit with only two years left of his term. Obama will face a hostile Congress as the Republicans will stymie his domestic policies. Obama will naturally be more focused on foreign policy to leave an impact of his presidency.

US confrontation with China over territorial claims, cyber espionage and Asian

security has strained relations between the two largest economies of the world. However, at the summit President Obama welcomed rise of "prosperous, peaceful, stable China". There was no meeting between President Putin and President Obama which reflected the unusual tension existing between Washington and Moscow over Ukraine. Russia is under stringent economic sanctions from the West, led by America.

The other major irritant, which could have troubled the Meeting was the strained relations between China and Japan over the unmanned Diaoyu islands in East China Sea. Japanese Prime Minister Shizo Abe was in Beijing for the meeting. But before the summit Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida met with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi and arrived at a four-point principled agreement to improve bilateral relations recognizing their different positions over the Islands. Both sides agreed to address political, diplomatic and security issues.

This 'major step' actually set an enabling atmosphere for Shinzo Abe and Xi Jinping to have a positive bilateral meeting on 10 November. President Xi in a sense lectured and reminded Abe of the four political documents signed between China and Japan. Xi urged Abe to "do more things that help enhance mutual trust ... and play constructive role in safeguarding the region's peace and security". Clearly, China does not want Japan to play the American card in East China Sea.

Also it was interesting to follow President Xi Jinping pledge of \$40 billion to develop the "Silk Road Economic Belt". However, as a non-APEC country Bangladesh was represented by President Abdul Hamid at the summit. President Hamid said Bangladesh would like to join APEC. He pointed out that BCIM-EC has the potential to open up opportunities for social and economic progress for millions of poor and marginal communities of the region.

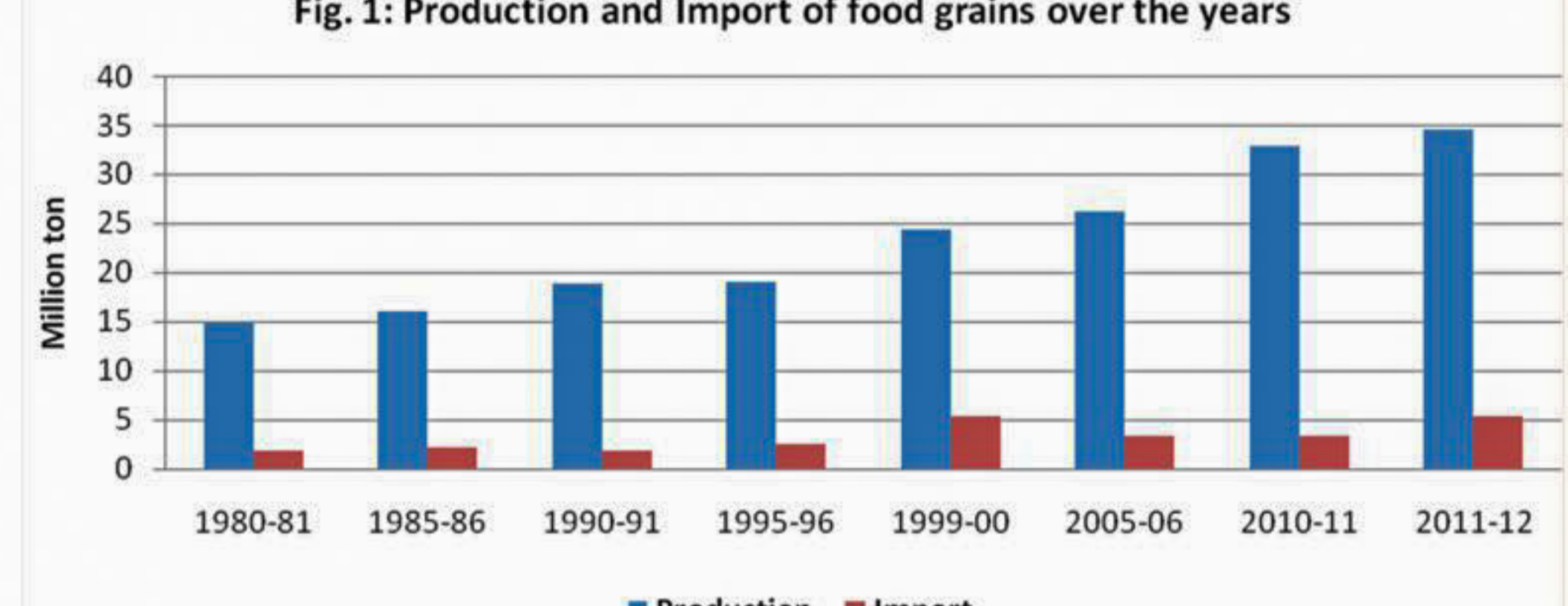
China appears to be slowly asserting its economic might in world diplomacy. Its geopolitical reach is growing. This was President Xi Jinping's first major international exposure since he took over the reins of China in 2013. He steered the summit skillfully and had the FTAAP adopted through consensus. President Xi summarized the four achievements of the summit: launch of study over FIAAP; Statement on the 25th anniversary of APEC; new momentum for innovation, reforms and growth; and, laying the foundation for connectivity in the Asia-Pacific region.

All these achievements are supposed to boost regional economies. Indeed further growth of China, the second largest economy of the world, will have multiplier effect in pulling up the economies of neighboring economies through connectivity and trade.

Food grain production: The challenges

M. SHAHE ALAM

DESPITE high pressure of population on land and other natural resources, Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in national food production over the last three and half decades. Although the country has achieved near self-sufficiency in food grain, continued population growth and the extreme scarcity of land raise the challenge of sustaining the gains. With the past remarkable production growth performance in food grain sector, the country barely made a dent towards improving its food security condition because of population growth of nearly 1.38% per annum.



ing the threat of major production shortfalls, inadequate food availability, and vulnerability from fluctuations in prices. In fact, natural disasters and Bangladesh have become almost synonymous in recent times. Bangladesh is considered to be one of the most vulnerable countries among the developing countries in the world, and more vulnerable than its neighbours.

Nevertheless, with the exploitation of full potentiality of cereal (especially rice) production, the government still has to import huge amount of food grains to meet the crisis during natural disasters.

Records of food import data for the last decades indeed imply that, in a production shortfall year due to natural calamities, import requirement increases up to 5.5 million tons. However, the given data for the period 1980 to 2012 show that although food grain production increased during this long period amidst the extremely vulnerable ecology, level of import also kept pace with it; i.e. food grain import increased -- ranging from 1.8 million tons to 5.5 million tons in different years (as shown in the figure). In fact, imports of cereals continued

with substantial increase in different years, mostly following poor harvests due to floods and droughts. Import of wheat increased consistently over time despite its increased domestic production and the reduction in food aid in recent years.

Production and availability of food grains through proper utilisation of the limited land in order to meeting the demand is a great challenge for Bangladesh. Food supply and availability, both at the household and individual levels, remain a major concern for the government. Since rice is the main staple, food security critically depends on its adequate availability and accessibility throughout the year. However, frequent occurrence of devastating floods, droughts, cyclones etc. have caused slower agricultural growth in Bangladesh, resulting in disruption of the overall supply of food grains. Therefore, it is necessary to enhance food grain production through increasing land productivity to meet the increasing demand for food.

Think-tank economists postulate that, because of population and income growth, the demand for cereal foods (especially for rice) is expected to rise by over 1.5% per annum for the next few decades. An estimate clearly indicated that by the year 2020, 37 million tons of food grain will be required for a projected population of 172 million. It is, therefore, presumed that Bangladesh would probably face an enormous challenge over the next decade in achieving food self-sufficiency and ensuring food security for all individuals and groups. In a subsistence-oriented agrarian economy such as Bangladesh's, domestic food production has an important role to play in the quest for food security. As such, the obsession with rice and cereals is evident amongst the policy makers in the country.

Potential challenges: The shrinking availability of land for crop production is a challenge for the economy. Gradual decrease of cultivable land on one hand and increased population on the other, coupled with degressing natural resources and competitive world market have put Bangladesh in a daunting situation. Domestic food production remains susceptible to various natural hazards (e.g. floods, drought, cyclone, submergence etc.), thereby perpetuat-

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ধানমন্ডি (২২৩৫ বর্গফুট)
মোহাম্মদপুর (১৫৭০ বর্গফুট)
পরিবাগ (১৩২০-১৬২৫ বর্গফুট)
বসুন্ধরা (১৬৪০ বর্গফুট)
বনানী (১০৪০-১৭৮০ বর্গফুট)
মতিঝিল (৮৯৫-১১৯০ বর্গফুট)
মগবাজার (১৪৭০-১৬৭৫ বর্গফুট)
উত্তরা (৮০৫-৩০৬৫ বর্গফুট)
বাসাবো (১১৭০/১১৮৫ বর্গফুট)
সিদ্ধেশ্বরী (১৩৩৫-২০৬০ বর্গফুট)
মিরপুর (৯৬৫-১৭৩০ বর্গফুট)
কাঁঠাল বাগান (১১৮০-১২৩০ বর্গফুট)

শেল্টেক ইনভেস্টমেন্ট
ফেয়ার ২০১৪ উপলক্ষে
ঢাকার বিভিন্ন প্রাইম
লোকেশনে আকর্ষণীয় মূল্যে
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অ্যাপার্টমেন্ট
বিক্রয় চলছে...

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QUOTABLE Quote

Talent hits a target no one else can hit; Genius hits a target no one else can see.

Arthur Schopenhauer

CROSSWORD by Thomas Joseph

ACROSS
1 Mouthwash target
6 Reader's light
10 Benefit
11 Find darling
13 Film
14 Name for a dog
15 Luau instrument
16 Used a spade
18 Greek vowel
19 Garments that lack waistslines
22 Charged particle
23 Chablis or Cabernet
24 Serving perfectly
27 Ranch workers
28 Newborn's need
29 Target
30 Garments for Hawaiian dancers
35 Fireplace item
36 Common article
37 Have dinner
38 Select group
40 Fry lightly
42 Jeans material
43 Surprise win
44 Lair

45 Jury members
DOWN
1 Full range
2 Conjure up
3 Black bird
4 1002, in old Rome
5 Lizard animal
6 Shirt size
7 Commotion
8 Takes up residence
9 Feign
12 Makes disappear
17 Coffee dispenser
20 Fork features
21 Wise teacher
24 Not straight
25 Sang seasonal songs
26 John Lennon song
27 Increases
29 Cabinet wood
31 Flower parts
32 Get more out of
33 Spud
34 Lets stand, in copy
39 Light metal
41 Gorilla, for one

Yesterday's answer

TEST SEAT
BALER ACTUP
AMINO TORRE
SAX TUBA INN
ELI PENGUIN
SERVES UMPIS
VASTER
ETON INUITIS
QUIETED RAPE
URN ISOTOPE
INKER RABID
PEEVE STONY
DRED EATS

CRYPTOQUOTE 9-20
NF ARCI GSTSXYF YJXCOURJRC
YJXCRAOIUJX NUIV YJXCUIJRC
YSOUISTUCA. -- EFDUX EQRCF

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: A HERO IS NO BRAVER THAN AN ORDINARY MAN, BUT HE IS BRAVER FIVE MINUTES LONGER.
-- RALPH WALDO EMERSON

A XYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW
One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

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Request for Proposal

Katalyst is a market development project that aims to contribute to increasing the income of poor men and women in rural areas. It does this by facilitating changes in services, inputs and product markets, which in turn increases the competitiveness of farmers and small enterprises. Katalyst is co-funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the UK Government, and the Danish International Development Agency (Danida). It is implemented by Swisscontact under the umbrella of the Ministry of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh.

Katalyst is looking to finance innovative ideas in the following issue:
Sub-facilitation for implementing market development interventions related to "Promotion of Balanced Application of Fertiliser through relevant government channels."

Katalyst invites interested consulting firms, international and local non-governmental organisations, with associated experience to submit innovative project proposals on this issue. The Request for Proposal and templates for submitting the proposals are available at: http://www.katalyst.com.bd/abtus_procurement.php

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