

Exams under marquees

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Three marquees with colourful walls and tarpaulins have popped up on the premises of Jaldhaka Pilot Girls' High School in Nilphamari's Jaldhaka upazila. At first glance, many passers-by might mistake them for a venue for a wedding or a fair or a circus. But actually, these are centres of the ongoing Junior School Certificate (JSC) examinations.

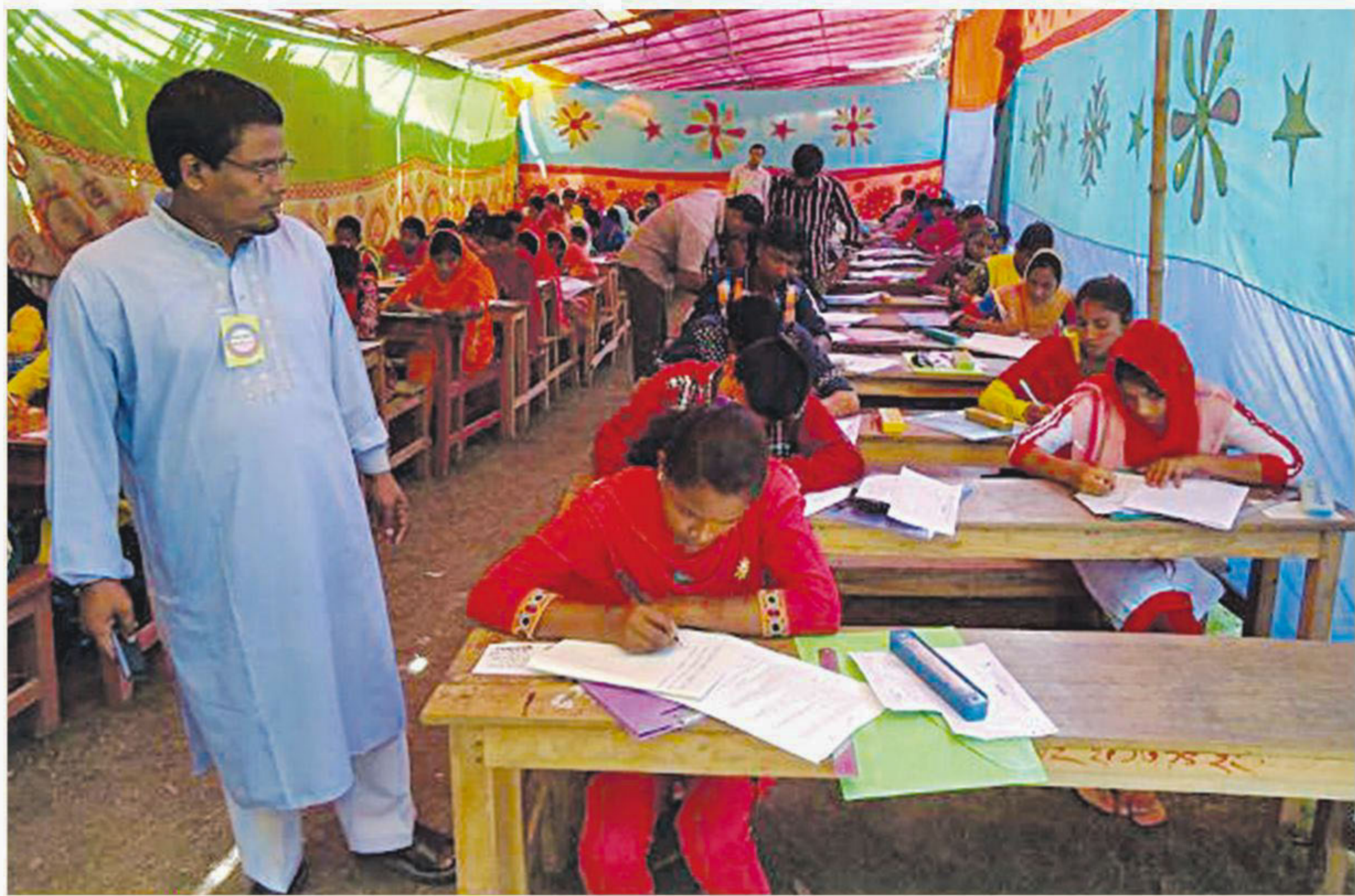
The school authorities have set up the temporary examination centres after failing to accommodate all the designated JSC examinees.

Wares Ali, headmaster of the school, said the upazila education committee recently directed the school authorities to hold the examination of 1,544 JSC examinees from 13 nearby high schools.

"We were having trouble to accommodate such a huge number of students as our school has room for about a thousand. We had to set up the marquees to accommodate all the examinees," he said, adding that they hired the colourful cloths around the tents and the tarpaulins from local decoration shops.

The correspondent visited the temporary exam centres on Monday and saw the examinees taking their religious studies exam. Some of

SEE PAGE 13 COL 4



Students taking JSC tests inside a marquee set up on the premises of Jaldhaka Pilot Girls' High School in Nilphamari yesterday. The school authorities had to go for this unique arrangement, as they couldn't accommodate the large number of examinees at the centre. PHOTO: STAR

ELECTIONS 2016 Malik running for US House

A CORRESPONDENT, New York

Educationist and social worker Dr Rashid Malik is the only Bangladeshi-American running for membership in the US House of Representatives.



He is contesting from Gwinnett County (District 7) in Georgia. Elections for the US Senate and House of Representatives will be held in some states today alongside the presidential election.

Community leaders at a fund-raising rally called for electing Malik. They said Malik is a role model for the new generation of Bangladeshi-Americans.

NYC Democratic Alliance organised the meeting at a restaurant in New York's Jackson Heights, with its Convenor Hasanuzzaman Hasan in the chair.

Malik said he was aiming to work for the new generation. Women's status would improve if people vote for the Democratic Party candidates, he added.

He made a brief comparison between Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton and Republican nominee Donald Trump. He said Hillary was a better candidate than Trump. He called upon the Bangladeshi-Americans to vote for Democratic Party candidates.

Hasanuzzaman said Malik's contesting the election would inspire the new generation of Bangladeshi-Americans. He urged Bangladeshi-Americans to vote for Malik as he would work for them.

Malik's election campaign manager Ali Hossain, Khandker Masudur Rahman, Awal Siddiqui and Mujibur Rahman also spoke, among others.

They said if elected, Malik would represent the new generation Bangladeshi-Americans in the US Congress.

The struggle

FROM PAGE 1

expand the business with financial support." Many in the community wish that the government could help to make financial support available in the interests of saving their traditional industry.

Deputy Commissioner of Manikganj Rashida Ferdousy, meanwhile, says she hopes to take initiative to give loans and financial assistance to the community so that their heritage of instrument making can be sustained.

To visit Badyakor Para of the village is yet to witness instruments in the making. Artisans are proud to say their instruments are being sold in markets across the country, including in Dhaka and Chittagong. Indeed, their instruments are also sold abroad.

Of a day they are involved in buying different timbers: mango, shishu, babla, neem and renti koroi. Goat skins are also in demand. As they can, they yet shape such elements of nature into instruments; still now do they craft the earliest beginnings of songs. But for how much longer the tradition will continue is far from clear.

Panic, not study in their minds

FROM PAGE 1

I want to study seriously but I can't."

His house is opposite to Bidushi's.

"How can my child pay attention to study after we lost almost all our valuables and while we live in fear all the time," said his father, Haridas Sutradhar, as he was showing the damaged kitchen and toilet.

Anamika lives in the next house. She is attending the Junior School Certificate (JSC) exams that began two days after the attack.

She has a test on information and communication technology (ICT) today but she was not taking any preparation for that.

"I can't study at night as I am scared there would be attack again," she said.

She got grade point 4.25 in PSC and hoped to do better in JSC but she

is worried that the present situation might affect her exams.

PSC examinees Nishita Das and Shaikat Das of Paschimpara, Borsha Das of Namasudrapara and Payel Kumar of Ghoshpara are hardly studying since the attacks.

These correspondents yesterday visited Ghoshpara, Kashipara and Namasudrapara where about 350 families live. Each family, having school and college-going students and examinees, was affected by the attacks.

Priti Sutradhar, a student of Nasirnagar Degree College, said atmosphere before and after the attack is completely different.

"I did well in previous tests but not in psychology and philosophy tests that took place after the attack," she said while talking about her BA sec-

ond-year exam.

A teacher of Singhagram Uttara Govt Primary School, Shilu Rani said, "Many of my Hindu students are not attending classes since the attack. I came to know that parents are not sending them out of fear."

Parents of the villages that came under attacks said what happened on October 30 centring a Facebook post "hurting the religious sentiment of Muslims" had left a huge impact on the education of their children.

Meanwhile, chairman of Comilla Education Board, Abdul Khaleq, visited the affected areas yesterday and talked to students of Hindu families.

"I told the students including the examinees to keep their spirit up," he told this newspaper over phone.

If you can't win

FROM PAGE 1

Ershad regime resonated in my mind.

Trump destroyed that tradition early on, brazenly declaring that he would accept the election results only if he won it. This one stance should have made the American voters reject him as a candidate as he was unwilling to accept the people's verdict if it went against him. But instead, it further spiked his popularity indicating that he has been able to create sufficient doubts in the minds of his supporters that the election process could be "rigged", as Trump has been claiming from the outset. Once again my memories of our own leaders casting doubts on our election process gave me the sense of déjà vu. But to their credit, our leaders never said outright that they would accept the poll verdict "only if I win."

Trump's action goes beyond today's election. He has wrought a serious damage to a fundamental institution of democracy, whose credibility is a precondition to forming any representative government. If people do not fully believe that the leaders who claim to represent them actually got their votes and feel that leaders are occupying their respective posts because of a "rigged" election, then one of the vital pillars on which democracy stands, collapses. There cannot be any "representative government" if that government is not elected through a free and fair election. Trump has created doubt in election itself with obvious repercussions on the outcome.

Early on, Trump apologists could have said that terming the system "rigged" meant that the process favoured the so-called established politicians and party bigwigs and was tilted against newcomers into politics like Trump. American voters should have understood what he really meant when he declared following the last

debate that he would "accept the results only if he wins."

We in Bangladesh have followed the US election with keen interest. With all its faults and blunders, and with the unquestioned burden of guilt of having invaded Iraq and nearly destroyed an ancient civilization, US still remains the biggest economy and the mightiest military power in the world. For us specifically, it is still one of the largest destinations of our RMG products. Though it is country whose reputation and prestige stands vastly damaged--mostly for their own doing-- it is a country that still sets many of the global agenda and influences outcomes of collective action as none other. What happens in the US is of great importance to Bangladesh as we seek greater access to the US market and aspire to become a middle income country in the near future.

For us the choice between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump as the future President of the USA could not be starker. Hillary is a global statesperson and has steered global affairs for long, not always successfully. She personally knows Bangladesh and has visited us more than once. She knows about the struggle against poverty that Bangladesh has waged and the democratic journey that we have made especially in empowerment of women.

Trump only knows Putin, and is most unlikely to have heard about MDG goals and what Bangladesh has achieved of it. His attitude towards Muslims would be another reason for all Muslim majority countries to stay as far away from him as possible. It would be quite some time before he would have time for developing countries like Bangladesh. Most of them are sources of migrants as far as he would be concerned.

So here, wishing Hillary Clinton success!



PSC examinees Bidushi Sutradhar and Pranoy Sutradhar, right, at their homes in Brahmanbaria's Nasirnagar upazila yesterday. The October 30 attacks in their locality left both of them traumatised.



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

A new age of darkness if Trump wins?

FROM PAGE 1

longest-lasting economic downturn in the history of the Western industrialized world.

In the United States, the Great Depression began soon after the stock market crash of October 1929 which sent Wall Street into a panic and wiped out millions of investors.

Trump has been campaigning on a protectionist trade and anti-immigration platform to grab the White House.

He has announced as president he would prohibit American companies like Ford from building plants in Mexico. He moans pessimistically that "China is eating our lunch" and is "sucking the blood out of the US"

His threat to slap tariffs on Chinese or Mexican imports mocks Republican leaders who back free trade, said The Economist in an article last October.

Months before, Reuters in a report on March 24 said former trade negotiators, trade lawyers, economists and business executives think this policy could boomerang for Trump and spark trade wars with China and Mexico and trigger financial market turmoil and possibly even a recession.

If elected, he declared, he will ban all Muslims from entering the USA and build a wall on the border to prevent Mexicans from entering USA.

The American Action Forum, a right-leaning policy institute based in Washington D.C., estimates that immediately and fully enforcing current immigration law, as Trump has sug-

gested, would cost the federal government from £326 billion to £490 billion, said the Mirror of UK, in a report on November 3.

It would shrink the US labour force by 11 million, reduce the real GDP by £1.3 trillion and take 20 years to complete. Trump figures he could do it in 18 months.

"It will harm the US economy," said Doug Holtz-Eakin, president of the American Action Forum and chief economic policy adviser to Sen. John McCain's 2008 presidential campaign, said the Mirror report. "Immigration is an enormous source of economic vitality."

"Does Trump aspire to be a 21st century Hoover?" questioned Real Clear Politics in an article last August.

Wall Street Journal in an article on November 3 said Hoover's trade policy caused him and the US a lot of grief, and should serve as a warning to voters inclined to take Trump seriously.

Economists and trade experts have long been warning that if Trump is elected and carries through with his promises, shock waves could be sent through the global economy and financial markets.

His promises and plans of actions, if elected president, have already worried not only America, but also rest of the world.

Trump has also earned a dubious distinction. No presidential candidate before Trump has ever been portrayed as a "notorious politician" by the US and global media.

He has been identified as a threat to American democracy and also world peace as he has been accused of trampling on the foundation stones of liberal democracy.

Worried by Trump's threat to tighten libel laws, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), the US-based press freedom watchdog, in an unprecedented move issued a statement accusing Trump of consistently betraying first amendment values.

"If Donald Trump should win the presidency it would represent a threat to press freedom," fears CPJ.

Trump has also been considered a global risk. Analyzing implications of his foreign policy--"America First"--US-led alliances and institutions, trade and terrorism, Politico in an article in June said Trump wants to reassert American power without a mature understanding of the basis of that power.

"He lives in a zero-sum world, one divided between winners and losers, good and evil, doers and freeloaders, us and them," said Politico, an American political journalism organisation.

"But America First won't strengthen America. It will alienate friends and embolden rivals. In the process, it will badly damage US commercial interests. It will undermine the institutions that the US and its allies created from the ashes of World War II and which continue to extend US international influence into the future. It will cost grave doubt on what America stands

for," it continued.

A WORLD OF TROUBLE

The winner tomorrow would face a difficult world as CNN explained in a report on Saturday, saying after a bruising brawl of a campaign, the next US commander in chief will inherit a world with the toughest array of foreign policy challenges in decades.

"The President's Situation Room meetings will focus on hot, cold and simmering conflicts around the globe, all playing out as Russia and China seek greater international clout, cyber attacks become increasingly disruptive, and long-time US allies worry about Washington's support," says CNN.

It says, Middle Eastern conflicts in Syria and Iraq are re-igniting sectarian tensions and sending destabilizing waves of refugees across the region and into Europe, where their presence is altering political dynamics. Asia is on hair-trigger alert because of an unpredictable North Korean leader who is improving his nuclear arsenal at an alarming rate. China is challenging US power in the South China Sea, while Russia is placing nuclear-capable missiles on NATO's doorstep and opposing the US in Syria, says CNN.

"The next president will confront "black swans" -- disruptive events that no one sees coming -- but they will also face some certainties, chief among them that foes will test their resolve not long after they move into the Oval Office," says CNN.

In such a world of trouble a wrong

headed US leader may worsen further the global situation, fear foreign policy experts.

Trump has been dubbed by many as America's most unpredictable candidate and political analysts think he could become America's most unpredictable commander-in-chief.

Trump's electoral campaign, according to Politico, has already raised a number of potentially destabilizing questions: will President Trump send US ground troops after ISIL? Confront Vladimir Putin, or let him run loose? Sanction Mexico or Japan? Bomb China's artificial islands in the South China Sea? Wage trade war on China? Attack Iran or North Korea?

"The campaign has provided daily evidence that Mr Trump would be a terrible president. He has exploited America's simmering racial tensions," said The Economist on November 5.

A NEW AGE OF DARKNESS?

Trump in his foreign policy speech in April declared that the US is "going to be a friend again" to the rest of the world. But the rest of the world does not feel safe. In the last few months, a shadow of fear has made the world jittery with Election Day drawing near.

From the very beginning, UK leaders have been denouncing Trump. A few months ago before his departure, UK Prime Minister David Cameron described Trump as "divisive, stupid, and wrong."

Trump's proposal for ban on Muslims and his derogatory remarks about London's elected Muslim mayor

have infuriated Britons.

"Trump's intensely anti-Muslim rhetoric will encourage a lot more militants to look beyond softer and more accessible targets in Europe toward the "big score," a deadly attack on Trump's America," said Politico.

Trump has annoyed leaders of some other countries by complaining that China, Mexico, Japan and others are dumping cheap products into American markets to harm US economy.

Leading newspapers in many countries including UK, China, Canada, Mexico, South Africa, Germany and Iran have kept denouncing Trump and some of them have been urging Americans not to vote for him.

A few months ago, the English-language publication of the state-owned Global Times in China launched a scathing attack on Trump.

"The rise of a racist in the US political arena worries the whole world...He has even been called another Benito Mussolini or Adolf Hitler by some Western media. Mussolini and Hitler came to power through elections, a heavy lesson for Western democracy," said the Chinese daily.

On November 4, the Guardian in an article said: "Should Trump win, it would be a victory for a candidate who has lied more than any in history, who is spectacularly unqualified for the job and who stands contrary to the very idea of expertise. It would be a triumph over truth, facts and knowledge. It would be the start of a new age of endarkenment."