

# It's going to be Hillary, and thank goodness for that!

FOUNDER EDITOR  
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## Attack on Santals

### Protect their rights

THE clash between Santals and workers of Rangpur Sugar Mills in Shahebganj backed by local police in Gaibandha, which resulted in the death of a Santal, is disturbing. It is also unacceptable that following the incident 20 houses of the Santals would be looted and vandalised by local people. Now the people of the ethnic community are living in deep fear of arrest and further harassment.

During the Pakistan period the government acquired the land from the Santals for a sugar cane farm. It was agreed that the land would be returned to the original owners if it were used for farming any other crops. However, the agreement was violated and the mill authority leased out the land for farming other crops. According to local upazila land office, only 92-97 acres of 1842.3 acres of the land were being used for farming sugarcane in 2014-15 fiscal year. The local Santals had complained about this infringement of the contract but nothing positive happened. The recent clash erupted when the Santals resisted illegal harvesting by mill workers.

We wonder why the local administration instead of finding an amicable solution of the issue sided with the mill works and used excessive force against the Santals who have every right to protect their rights. The government should properly investigate the issue. The role of the mill authority should also be scrutinised. Any further harassment of the ethnic community needs to be stopped. Also the administration should ensure that the letter and spirit of the agreement made at the time of the acquisition of the land be respected.

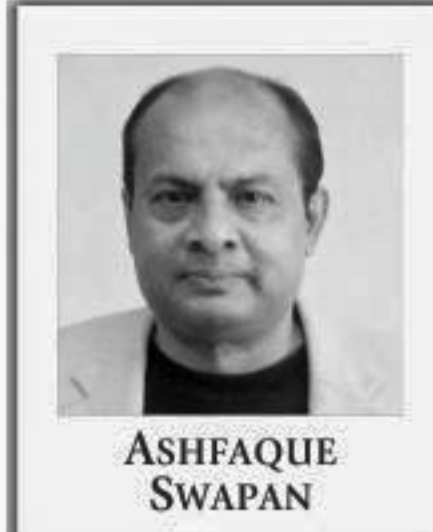
## Our shrinking forests

### A wakeup call

THE news of Bangladesh being among the countries in Asia with least forest is unsettling. According to data released by the Asian Development Bank, the country has only 11.2 percent of its land mass under forest, a whopping 13.8 percent short of the desired forest cover. That this has happened in spite of a string of afforestation drives is disappointing. However, there is no denying that the destruction of our forests, the lung of the nation, has been going on for a rather long time, and that too with a certain degree of impunity. Plunderers, at times colluded with unscrupulous forest officials, brazenly carry out their criminal activities untouched by the proverbial long arm of the law.

To make it more grievous, housing and industrialisation, the twin by-product of a growing population demand more land, which, in the absence of any proper planning, is eating away our dwindling forests. We wonder if adequate plantation has at all been carried out to make up for the lost trees. The negative effects of these self-sabotaging actions are manifested in the form of the heating of the climate, not to mention the desertification of certain areas that will cause catastrophic effects on habitation and cultivation in the long run.

It is indeed worth mentioning that a 25 percent of forest cover is not only an ecological necessity, it also provides us with income generating activities that contribute to the growth of the national economy as a whole. We urge the government to vigorously launch afforestation drives and raise awareness campaigns so as to save us from a catastrophe that is lurking at the bend. Plundering of the forests must be dealt with a strong hand. Communities who live on the fringes of the forests can also play a pivotal role in this regard.



ASHFAQUR SWAPAN

IT'S that time before the US elections and all everyone wants to know is who will be the next U.S. president. It will be Hillary Clinton, the Democratic candidate.

I am going to stick my neck out and say it. The prediction is not without risk, either for me or *The Daily Star*. Could this be another famous "Dewey Beats Truman" moment? *The Chicago Daily Tribune* on November 3, 1948, went to press, assured by pollsters, with the headline of Republican candidate John Dewey beating Democrat Harry Truman.

They were famously wrong. Their monumental gaffe resulted in a famous photo of president-elect Harry Truman holding that front page gleefully, grinning ear-to-ear.

Be that as it may, I am confident it will be Hillary.

The number crunchers and pollsters are trying to discern the public will, and we have access to some revealing nuggets.

If you want one reason that will prevent the orange horror - the Republican candidate Donald J. Trump - from disgracing the highest office of the United States, I'll give it to you in two words - "Hispanic backlash."

"The story of this election may be the mobilisation of the Hispanic vote," South Carolina Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham wryly noted to *The New York Times*. "So Trump deserves the award for

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PHOTO: AFP

the Hispanic turnout. He did more to get them out than any Democrat has ever done."

How sweet is this poetic justice. Trump kicked off his campaign insulting so-called illegal immigrants - read Hispanics - with egregious untruths. He said Mexico was sending rapists on purpose. He thought he could get away with insulting one of America's poorest, most defenseless minorities.

After all, he might have figured, Hispanics tend to have a poor record of voting.

Not this time. Early voting has begun, and poll watchers are reporting a surge in voting of Hispanic voters in Florida and Nevada - essentially sealing Trump's fate.

Of course, the blame is not entirely Trump's. The Republican share of the Hispanic vote has been steadily going down from the peak it reached with George W. Bush. The Donald is expected to win considerably less, around 20 percent, woefully behind the share he needs to win the elections.

There are other indications suggesting a Hillary victory. For all the recent drama over Hillary's misuse of emails while in office, electoral surveys have been remarkably stable over the months. A comparison of the *Wall Street Journal*/NBC poll in July and October shows that the Hillary and Trump's net like/dislike ratio - a common indicator of a candidate's chances - were virtually identical in July and October. Both have high negatives, it's just that people like Trump even less than Hillary.

The electoral math - remember, in the US, presidential elections are won state by state - still looks good for Hillary.

"After months of campaigning, the presidential race has come down to this: Democrat Hillary Clinton has several apparent paths to the White House, while Republican Donald Trump must sweep battleground states and seize at least one Democratic-leaning state," the *Wall Street Journal* reports.

"His path to victory, far narrower than Mrs. Clinton's, also requires a win in at least one state that has long been in the Democratic column."

The real question is how on earth did an obnoxious, mendacious self-promoter like Trump come this far. (And remains close enough to make the race too close to call.)

Just consider: we have a candidate who is so temperamentally unstable that he can't be trusted with a Twitter account.

"Aides to Mr. Trump have finally wrested away the Twitter account that he used to colourfully - and often counterproductively - savage his rivals," reports *The New York Times*. "But offline, Mr. Trump still privately muses about all of the ways he will punish his enemies after Election Day, including a threat to fund a 'super PAC' with vengeance as its core mission."

Trust President Barack Obama to come up with a devastating critique. "If somebody can't handle a Twitter account, they can't handle the nuclear codes," he taunted at an election rally.

If the election results are clear, is the US media overreacting? Is the election coverage "A tale/ Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury/ Signifying nothing," as Shakespeare's Macbeth had sourly noted?

Well, yes and no. The media can be over the top, but both the Hillary and Trump campaigns seem to believe the race has tightened. The Clinton campaign is sending former President Bill Clinton and President Obama to Michigan, a state they had considered solidly on their side. The Trump campaign is sending its candidate to Minnesota - though the logic here is more dubious.

Even if Hillary wins, Trump will have changed the US political landscape forever.

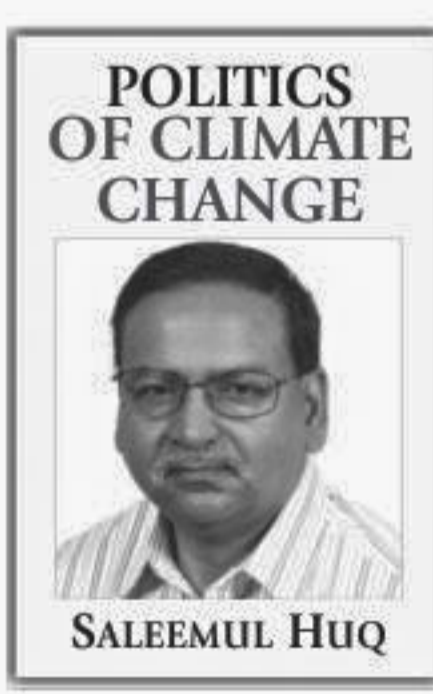
Peter Wehner, who served in the last three Republican administrations noted in *The New York Times*:

"In a post-Trump world, Republicans need to ask themselves if their party will be characterised by its aspirations or its resentments. Can it make its own inner peace with living in an increasingly diverse and non-white America? Does it conceive of its role as tamping down or inflaming ugly passions? Does it believe in a just social order or not?"

We may know who will be the next US president on November 8, but that question will take longer to answer.

The writer is a contributing editor for *Siliconer*, a monthly periodical for South Asians in the United States. He has been writing for US-based South Asian media for over 25 years.

# Paris Agreement on Climate Change revs up



SALEEMUL HUQ

THE morning of last Monday in Marrakech, Laurent Fabius, the Environment Minister of France, who was president of the United Nations

Framework on Climate Change's (UNFCCC) 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) since last December, handed over the presidency to Hakima El Haite, the Environment Minister of Morocco. She has now taken over as President of COP22 here in Marrakech.

This has now kicked off the next two weeks of discussions about how all countries can ramp up action to tackle climate change, as was agreed at the Paris Agreement last year. The good news is that more than a hundred countries have already ratified the Paris Agreement and it came into force as international law this week. Hence, the first meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement will be held in Marrakech on November 15, with a number of heads of governments attending, including Bangladesh's Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina.

The bad news is that the actions required to meet the long term temperature goal of 1.5 degree Celcius are far more difficult than simply agreeing to it on paper as we did last year in Paris. If we add up all the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases that countries have put forward so far, we are still headed for more than 2 degrees.

Thus, each and every country, including both poor as well as rich nations, will need to agree to increase their level of ambition, so that collectively the temperature can be kept at 1.5 degrees.

Morocco has been a first mover in building the biggest solar array for grid electricity in the world. This demonstrates that solar energy is now

renewable energy, which needs to be undertaken at accelerated scales by each and every country in order to ensure that the temperature is kept below the 1.5 degree Celcius long term temperature goal agreed in the Paris Agreement.

In addition to the need to ramp up ambition towards renewable energy, COP22 will also be the "Loss and Damage COP", as a very

action on the basis of what we already know. This will be a contentious issue over the next two weeks in Marrakech.

Finally, in COP22 as in every previous COP, financing actions to tackle climate change will once again be a bone of contention. This issue does not have so much to do with new decisions to be taken in COP22, but rather to agree on ways to implement previous COP decisions, starting with the pledge by developed countries to provide USD 100 billion US a year from 2020 to the developing countries to tackle climate change. So far, they have delivered around USD 10 billion mainly through the Green Climate Fund (GCF), but it is flowing at a trickle pace and thus needs to be ramped up both in quantity as well as swiftness of delivery.

Bangladesh, as always, will be expected to play an important part in the COP with the government delegates negotiating as part of the Least Developed Countries (LDC) group with NGOs, academics and media all playing their respective roles to ensure that the country is seen as a leader in tackling climate change, even though it remains a poor and vulnerable nation.

This year the presence of the Prime Minister on the last days of the COP will be an added opportunity for showcasing Bangladesh's leadership in tackling climate change.

I will be reporting back regularly from Marrakech on the progress of the talks.

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PHOTO: COP22

going to scale at the level of fossil fuel driven power plants of the last century.

Countries from China to the US are now investing in large scale renewable energy to generate electricity, and last year, the total global investments in renewable energy surpassed investment in fossil fuel based energy generation.

Thus, it seems that the world may be about to reach a tipping point away from fossil based energy to

important decision has to be taken on the report of the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) on Loss and Damage, alongside the adoption of a new five year work programme. This topic is a highly political one as the developed countries are trying to delay decisions and want to continue to talk and collect evidence while the developing countries, led by the most vulnerable nations, want to move into

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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### US elections 2016

After tomorrow, we will know whether Hillary Clinton of the centre-left Democratic Party or Donald Trump of the centre-right Republican Party will be elected as the 45th President of the US.

Trump's temperament, inexperience, belief in wild conspiracy theories, immoral behaviour and attitude towards women is too much of a threat not only for the US but the world. For a party which has given the world Abraham Lincoln and Ronald Reagan, and proponents and defenders of internationalism, military interventionism to prevent genocide and war-crimes, free-trade and socially conservative family values, Trump is highly unsuitable.

For the first time ever, therefore, I will be supporting and endorsing a Democrat in the White House, and hope that the Republican Party will be able to reform their great party after Trump's defeat. A strong and effectual Republican Party is important for American democracy and the world at large. It is imperative that Americans elect Hillary Clinton as their president!

Aranya Syed  
United Kingdom

### ACC recommendations for banking sector overhaul

The Anti Corruption Commission has included recommendations in its annual report to the president to curb crimes and irregularities in the banking sector. It urges that a Board be formed by professionals with expert knowledge of banking. Lack of banking knowledge prevents officials from finding out irregularities and crimes taking place in financial institutions.

I agree with the recommendation, and would like to add that frequent interference of directors from other institutions in internal and loan sanctioning activities further weakens the system.

Zonaed Emran  
On Email