

Trump wins

How will he bridge the divide?

AGAINST all media predictions, Donald J. Trump will be sworn in as the next President of the United States of America on January 20, 2017. Trump's victory shows the anti-establishment sentiment of the American people, who have elected someone who is not a career politician, as President. They have voted for Trump, hoping for real and substantive change. And now the question is, will Trump be able to deliver?

Another aspect clearly brought to the fore during this election has been the deep existing divisions within the American society that have only been further widened by the acrimonious campaign. On the other hand Trump has walked a strategy along nationalistic lines in his election campaign. Resurgence of xenophobic feelings, however, should be checked, as it is important to remember that the policies pursued by the US have global implications.

One must wait to find out how he implements his promises. He will certainly face some big challenges, a polarised society being one. Will Trump be able to bridge the divide and bring the American nation together?

Trump has already stated that he would pursue a foreign policy which is less interventionist, focusing more on American domestic issues. The challenge of defeating ISIS is another Trump will have to face. He has said repeatedly that he has a plan to deal with ISIS, without elaborating much on what that is. Will he be able to work with the international community to bring an end to the threat of extremism?

We congratulate the new President and hope that he will pursue an inclusive agenda at home and help bring peace to areas of the world currently experiencing great strife, in many places because of flawed US strategic policy.

Stalkers turn brutal

Tough response needed

IT is shocking to look at pictures of a father writhing in pain after both his legs had to undergo amputation after being assaulted by a bunch of men who were harassing his daughters.

According to family members, the prime accused belongs to a front organisation of the ruling party. Kamal Hossain and the other six accused in the case had the audacity to threaten Shahanur Alam for putting up a protest against their harassment of his daughters. The only reason why he survived the murderous attack is because local people came to his rescue as he was presumed dead by the gang.

As the incident is now registered with the police, a defamation campaign is underway to cast aspersions on the victims. Given that the gang has alleged political affiliation, family members of the victim are fearful of retribution and it is they who have gone into hiding for safety. What is this country coming to? Stalking is becoming an epidemic that has taken the lives of countless people, victims or those who protested the stalking. There is of course a social angle to it where morals and values are on the decay. However, we cannot turn the other eye on repeated examples of such incidents occurring where the powerful elements in society get away with such barbarous behaviour, especially where the law is slow to react. Stalking is encouraged by lack of action against potential stalkers and therein lies the challenge. We demand tough action by the law enforcers and a zero tolerance from the process against such acts of sexual harassment. Impunity enjoyed by those connected to power must also be eliminated.

STRATEGICALLY SPEAKING



BRIG GEN
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IT was beyond the imagination, even of the many diehard 'Trumpians' who, reportedly, were invoking a miracle for a Trump win. Donald Trump has won by a big margin on electoral votes while most pollsters had given it to his opponent and many outside the US were hoping for a Clinton victory. For him, the road to 270 was tortuous with many permutations and combinations and lots of 'ifs' and 'buts'. He belied all statistics to get to it. It is remarkable too that he has pulled it off despite the fact that several top ranking Republicans had deserted him and several among them did not even vote for him.

Both Hilary Clinton and Donald Trump were the two most unpopular candidates in US electoral history. And it was a choice between the lesser of two 'evils'. Interestingly, according to the pre-election polls, Trump was the more disliked of the two. That being so, and when most people thought that he was not qualified for the job because he didn't have the temperament for it, how come he carried the day? Do a hunger for change and anger with the government and government institutions account for it, and in spite of their dislike for Trump, the electorate thought that he could bring the change. But the question is whether it will be a change for the better or a regression backwards? He was a rank outsider who exploited the sentiments of the majority Whites. Would one be wrong to suggest that, if anything, Trump victory only proves that one can win a US presidential race with only White support?

While history was made eight years ago when the Americans sent a Black man to the White House first time in its 240 years history, by electing Donald Trump, America has created another kind of history; he is the first not to have held any public office, to be elected to the office of, admittedly, the most powerful presidency in the world.

Come Friday, January 20, 2017, there will be in the White House a fickle minded man with an erratic and wobbly mind with a finger on the nuclear button. By his own admission, Trump is not a politician. And at every opportunity he berated and excoriated politicians, blaming them for everything

suggested that South Korea and Japan might be wise to develop them. These kinds of statements are having an effect. A number of political leaders, mostly from the very conservative sides of the parties, are openly calling for nuclear weapons.

Back in July, Trump declared that if Baltic members of NATO are attacked, he would decide whether to defend them on the basis of whether they had "fulfilled their obligations to us", infuriating some leaders of that region. The president of Estonia rejected the suggestion that his country has not done its part for NATO. Despite his professed hard line on China, some Chinese officials have concluded that he is a novice who makes hollow threats and would be easier than Hillary to handle. For example, Trump's "America First" policy has been understood in China as the lament of a permissive, weak America.

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through an implanted electrode, have swept America away. Lies, piled upon more lies that became too much even for the most equable of us, won.

Trump, whose contempt for the democratic processes is matched only by the deep contempt he has for all who mistake his contempt for the American experiment for their deep disappointment in it, is poised to become the leader of the free world. The loutish reality TV star-turned-politician, who measured the intelligence of his fellow citizens and citizens of the world by his heavily leveraged net worth and found them riotously lacking, has defeated a candidate who had eight years of experience as First Lady, eight more as a senator for the state of New York and four as secretary of state and a lifelong commitment towards improving the conditions of ordinary Americans.

Now that the sickening charade of his campaign is over, it is a good time to ask what exactly he would be like as the President of the United States. Will his presidency be like his campaign? Will he start with issuing executive orders on important matters, an idea inspired by Reagan's first week in the White House? Can Trump renounce the Paris Agreement on greenhouse-gas emission, just like George Bush, in 2002, "unsigned" US support for the International Criminal Court? Will he re-start exploitation of the Keystone pipeline, suspend the Syrian refugee programme, direct the Department of Commerce to bring trade cases against China and relax background checks to loosen restrictions on gun purchases as he talked about on the campaign trail?

The Donald has already altered the chemistry of international politics far beyond the campaign. After seventy years of American efforts to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons, he has

that is wrong in the country. But the US electorate has expressed their choice which must be respected but it is a choice which many in the rest of the world thinks would be a disaster for the US and the rest of the world. After all, a US president is not just a US president. His strategic, economic and social policies, if we go by his articulations, will have deep ramifications all over the world, as much as within the US.

by acrimony and name calling. The campaign saw little discussion of policy matters and more on the character of the candidates, though Trump's indiscretions and off the cuff comments had much to do with the slump in his ratings in October.

Trump was thrown a lifeline just a fortnight before the election by the FBI boss' announcement that he was not done with the investigation yet of the

American people towards each other.

The world is waiting to see how the Trump administration would look like in the next four years. He has promised to undo many policies of the Obama administration and cancel all executive orders that President Obama has issued. However, Trump did not offer any policy alternative at all. It will be interesting to see how he implements his immigration policy. It will be interesting too to see how



Supporters of then Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump cheer as they watch the election results during election night.

PHOTO: AFP

However, what has surprised many people is that a candidate for the White House, who started on a negative note by abusing minorities of every hue, Latinos, Mexicans, black Americans, Muslims, war veterans, even a handicapped journalist, and made no secret of his deeply misogynistic attitude, and who objectifies women, should not only get the party ticket but go on to win the election. Is it American politics, the American society, or the system that this can be ascribed to? Or is that America is not yet ready for a women president?

We are glad that the election is, mercifully, over, mostly because it was perhaps the most divisive and rancorous election campaign in US history, marked

Hilary emails, only to announce a week later that there was nothing new to report. Only time can say what impact, if any, Comey's letter to the Congress has had on the outcome of the results.

Trump created xenophobia, built on it and exploited it. It may have gained him the key to the White House, but, unfortunately, the campaign has left a deep scar in the country that may take time to heal. He drummed up support by rousing nationalist feeling which, disturbingly, resonated with a large number of Americans. And what should be worrisome for the American society is not that this has been reflected in the polls only, but that this divide has manifested in the behaviour of the

he will fund the rebuilding of the military that he has promised alongside affecting the biggest budgetcut, and what he will do with NATO which he thinks has become obsolescent. He has managed to alienate many of his allies, how will he close the schism?

As for Hillary Clinton, it is time for a very hard look back and ask what went wrong.

The US election results reflect the majority view of how and what America should be. But that is an America that many Americans and most of us who are not, would not be comfortable with.

The writer is Associate Editor, The Daily Star.

TRUMP WINS

America gazed long into an abyss and the abyss is now gazing back into it



IN OTHER WORDS
AMITAVA KAR

IT is no longer the stuff of dark comedy. The propaganda signals, that Donald Trump seems to have been receiving from Planet Mongo

through an implanted electrode, have swept America away. Lies, piled upon more lies that became too much even for the most equable of us, won.

Trump, whose contempt for the democratic processes is matched only by the deep contempt he has for all who mistake his contempt for the American experiment for their deep disappointment in it, is poised to become the leader of the free world. The loutish reality TV star-turned-politician, who measured the intelligence of his fellow citizens and citizens of the world by his heavily leveraged net worth and found them riotously lacking, has defeated a candidate who had eight years of experience as First Lady, eight more as a senator for the state of New York and four as secretary of state and a lifelong commitment towards improving the conditions of ordinary Americans.

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militant organisations are reportedly using his words and image as recruiting materials. Closer to home, his harsh criticism of Mexicans has fuelled the rise of Andrés Manuel López Obrador, a hard-line leftist who has proposed to cut off intelligence ties with the United States.

How alarmed should the world be? It is true that his policy positions are fluid. A lot of people also argue that the



Is everything negotiable?

PHOTO: ESQUIRE

checks and balances enshrined in the US Constitution will limit the power of his presidency and he won't be able to govern the way he has been talking. But the checks and balances are, in fact, much weaker than most people assume. As president, Trump will be able to tilt the Supreme Court to the right with one vacancy to fill immediately and possibly three more sitting Justices who are in their late seventies or early eighties. And both chambers of the Congress are controlled by the Republicans.

In the recent years, US Congress has delegated a great deal of power to the President. Presidents have claimed more and more power under the Constitution and Congress has given in. And the judiciary is slow. If a president moves fast, he can get a lot done before the courts can stop him. A recent example of such a situation is Bush's war on terror. The judiciary ultimately put a lot of constraints on Bush but it took a very long time. Despite a complainant Congress, it would, however, be nearly impossible for Trump to repeal Obamacare as many have been dreaming. Republicans need sixty votes in the Senate to

overcome a Democratic filibuster.

Trump may also be constrained by isolated acts of disobedience by high ranking officials. To combat terrorism, he has said, "You have to take out their families," and use tactics that are "frankly unthinkable" and "a hell of a lot worse than waterboarding." Michael Hayden, a former US Air Force four-star general who served as the Director of CIA and of the NSA has said that senior officers would refuse to carry out such orders. "You are required not to follow an unlawful order."

For about one and a half year, Trump has encouraged everyone to see him as a work in progress. "Everything is negotiable," he famously declared. Is it really? In *Trump: Think Like a Billionaire (2004)*, Trump wrote "The day I realised it can be smart to be shallow was, for me, a deep experience."

Today America and the world seek solace in the imagination that a Trump presidency would be something other than the campaign that created it.

America has survived Bush. Can it survive Trump?

The writer is a member of the Editorial Team.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Appalled at the cruelty against the Hindu community

We are outraged at the attack on the Hindu community in Brahmanbaria. The law enforcement agencies responsible for the safety of all civilians could not protect the victims.

All too often, bigots of the society disrupt peace, security and stability, and spoil our secular image to the global community. These people do not represent our culture and values.

We urge the government to take stringent measures by conducting credible investigation through a high-level probe committee and, if necessary, consisting of a judicial body. The perpetrators should be held accountable for the damages. Finally, awareness programmes should be launched to spread the message of communal harmony.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to the victims of the Hindu community.

Md. Abdur Rahim
University of Dhaka

Save the tigers

Tigers, one of the most beautiful mammals on Earth, are growing extinct due to poaching and land development. They play a pivotal role in sustaining the biodiversity of forests, in maintaining healthy ecology, habitat conservation and the livelihoods of rural communities. The past hundred years has seen 95 percent reduction in tiger population.

The biggest threat is the loss of prey as a result of loss of habitat. Tigers turn to domestic livestock for food, which makes them unpopular with ranchers, who shoot them to death. In other instances, they are hunted down for the manufacture of medicines, rugs, etc.

At this rate, our future generations may not be able to see tigers outside of pictures. It is our collective responsibility to promote the protection and expansion of tiger habitats, and prevent their extinction.

Zeshan Nasir
On Email