

# The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR  
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## Banning outsiders on DU campus

### Rescind whimsical decision

There are two aspects of the Dhaka University authorities' decision to keep the campus off-limits to outsiders. First comes the question of whether the decision is implementable. Setting up security checkpoints at every entry point and posting security guards there to check the ID cards of all people who want to go inside is a huge task and needs huge resources. Although we are not making any value judgment of the decision, we simply want to know if it is possible at all to implement the decision, given the large number of people who regularly go to the campus. Secondly, Dhaka University has been the life-blood of our major democratic movements. It has always been the centre of all kinds of cultural and intellectual activities of the country; it has always been a centre of free thinkers. Various seminars, symposiums and workshops are regularly held on the campus. Therefore, banning people from entering the campus is an absurd decision, on whatever premises the decision might have been taken.

Moreover, if the authorities are sincere about stopping the intrusion of outsiders, they should first look into the residential halls of the university where, reportedly, a large number of non-students have been residing under the protection of, and supported by, the powers that be. Without taking any steps against them, why are the authorities making the campus off-limits to general people? Are we to assume that they are planning to turn the university into a mini cantonment?

The authorities should rescind the decision immediately and let the DU campus be a place where people from all walks of life can come and join all kinds of cultural and intellectual activities and be enlightened.

## Female expat workers need protection

### Disregarding issue of mistreatment is detrimental

The Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment minister's comments that our female workers in Saudi Arabia are returning due to language problems and food habits, amount to virtual denial of the reality on the ground. Can one overlook the hundreds of cases of women who have been forced to return with marks of physical abuse while being employed in that country? To state that these women have been making "false statements" is appalling and goes to show that the authorities have opted to disregard the human rights abuse that our workers have to endure in foreign lands which has forced as many as 1,500 Bangladeshi women to return home prematurely over the last six months.

This paper has published many reports about the pathetic conditions that many of our female workers face in the Middle East which include physical torture, sexual abuse and even rape. We have repeatedly urged authorities to take measures through our embassies in those countries to address the plight of our workers, but little has changed. Now with the minister coming out in the parliament with the rather incomprehensible explanation about our women workers abroad, what hope is there for Bangladeshi women workers to get protection from their government?

It is ironic that while other Asian countries like Indonesia and the Philippines have stopped sending female workers to these countries because of their own experiences, we continue to encourage more women to go work there. Concrete action should be taken by our authorities to work with the Saudi authorities to ensure workers' rights. And if that can't be done, we should reconsider the decision to send our women workers to face suffering and degradation.

# Hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil... but do some good, at least!



BRIG GEN SHAHEDUL ANAM KHAN NDC, PSC (RETD)

**STRATEGICALLY SPEAKING**  
The police handling of the entire anti-quota episode so far reminds me of the pictorial idiom that one finds displayed in many public places in China and Japan, in particular in the form of three primates popularly known as the thinking sages or the wise apes, each covering three of the five main sensory organs. And I had often wondered what that meant. The three figures, by their postures must surely be conveying some deep-rooted wisdom which only the wise and the insightful can fathom. But I could not muster enough courage, during my three-year stint in China, lest be thought of as a fool, to ask my Chinese friends the message the three were trying to convey. In doing so I proved right a Confucius saying that the man who asks a question is a fool for a minute, the man who does not ask is a fool for life. I have been ignorant about this till I saw police in action, particularly against the recent quota reform protesters.

One of the meanings imputed to the idiom is being a good boy, distancing oneself from evil thoughts, evil words and evil action, while another is not to shy away from acting against the bad, evil and the corrupt. But little did I realise, till recently, how literally the second explanation of the axiom has been made an article of faith by an agency in this country whose bounden obligation it is to

see that evil, in every form or shape, is purged from the society.

That is why the police fail to see a quota reform protagonist being beaten mercilessly with a hammer by one member of the pro government student cadre, while several others were beating him with wooden implements on the streets of Rajshahi, or grossly distorting the actual narrative of the picture to make it a "mere scuffle" between "some

ensuring their freedom to exercise their basic rights.

This despicable episode, one fears, is the agonising culmination of the anti-quota movement which was carried out without breaking any law. Given that even the prime minister had announced her intention to do away with the quota system on the floor of the Sangsad, the treatment meted out to the quota reform group is shocking. Regrettably, the

takers in our law enforcing agencies. When they cannot see what only an infantile blind person will miss, or hear and speak only what their political masters would be happy with, we are in one way allowing evil to order, and be a part, of our lives.

The idiom conveys a thought that is a double-entendre, carrying more than one meaning. But by conveying the apparently very astute words, what is overlooked is



Police take quota reform movement leaders Faruk Hassan, left, and Moshir Rahman to a Dhaka court on Johnson Road on Tuesday. The court later placed the two joint conveners of Bangladesh Sadharan Chhatra Adhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad on two-day remands.

PHOTO: STAR

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members of the public" and a "so-called student" when that "so-called student" victim happens to be a Masters student in RU. And those "members of the public", about ten of them, have been identified by our reporter as leaders and activists of the of the pro government student wing. Perhaps the local police can take some lessons from the reporter as to how to identify offenders and lawbreakers, and unlearn the lessons of how not to identify reprobates, particularly those linked to power. It is regrettable that the distinction between the administration and the ruling party has been so blurred that the state agencies forget their real obligation—the safety and security of the common and

victims are the ones who are being hounded out by the police and pro ruling party student organisation. And even hospitals are refusing treatment to wounded activists. At least in one case that we know of, Toriqlul Islam was turned away from RMCH, according to his mother, which predictably the hospital authorities have denied. While the attackers remain invisible, only in the eyes of the police, the quota reform movement leaders are arrested and put on remand, two of them allegedly for vandalising the DU VC's residence.

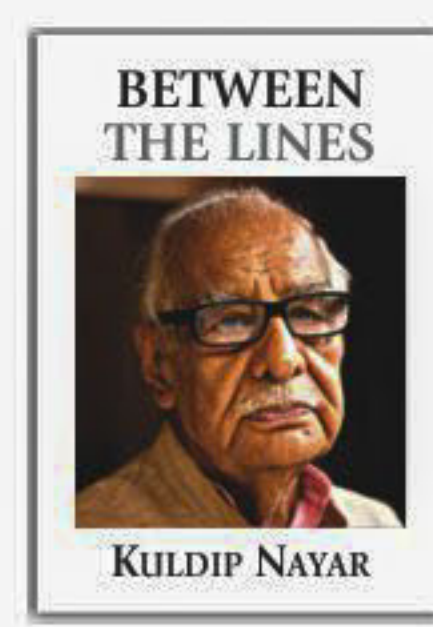
Every day police actions, or better put, inaction, to deal with excesses of ruling party apparatchiks, leads me to believe that the maxim has found very dedicated

that two of the three figures are either watching, hearing or seeing the proceedings around them, since they cannot cover all the three organs simultaneously. I wonder whether our law enforcers are capable of shutting everything off and see, hear or do nothing

It is not advisable always to take wise advice selectively, certainly not for the police. The police must always hear the evil, see the evil to chastise the evil. To turn a blind eye to crimes is not only turning back on the oath they take before induction in the force but also encouraging evil to perpetuate in, and pervade our lives.

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## Rift in India-US relations



KULDIP NAYAR

**BETWEEN THE LINES**  
AN autocrat can really unhinge a democratic system. This is what President Donald Trump is doing. But he is also turning into an imperialist power. India has had a

good understanding with America and the two democracies, one the strongest and the other the largest, have ambled their way through in the chaotic world.

President Trump has reportedly asked India to stop importing oil from Iran. New Delhi has explained that India has reportedly told Washington that it has entered into a long-term tie-up to import oil from Iran because it assured a regular supply and at a comparatively cheaper price. This understanding between India and America has been suddenly disturbed by Trump who cancelled the talks between the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj.

This type of pressure has naturally annoyed New Delhi. But it believed that the talks between the two countries would iron out the differences. Yet, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo spoke to Sushma Swaraj to express his regret and deep disappointment at the US having to postpone the 2+2 dialogue for unavoidable reasons. He also sought the Indian foreign minister's understanding and they mutually agreed to identify

convenient dates to hold the dialogue at the earliest.

However, there was no formal word from Washington on the development which occurred as the visiting US ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley, held talks with top Indian leaders on a wide range of issues. Yet, it became very clear when a senior State Department official indicated that there would be no waivers on what the US intended doing on Iran. Apart from passing the message on to its allies in Europe and Asia, an intra-agency team of state and treasury department officials is scheduled to visit India, China

They had also agreed to make concerted efforts to encourage bilateral trade and economic cooperation. This involved boosting non-oil trade and investment in infrastructure projects including the development of Chabahar port complex, Chabahar-Fahraj-Bam railway link and marine oil tanking terminal at an agreed location, as well as Iranian interests to invest and participate in infrastructure projects in India.

New Delhi has to look after its own interests. It has accommodated Washington like cutting imports from

Modi and himself as "world leaders". It has enabled them to directly hear from their citizens.

In the past, India had friendly presidents in John F Kennedy, Bill Clinton and Barack Obama. But they did very little to help New Delhi in its strategic and development requirements. They were obsessed with the thought that they should not in any way rub Pakistan the wrong way. New Delhi never wanted them to do anything which would mean a tilt towards it.

But President Trump has departed from the past American policy. The resolve of the two countries to strengthen anti-terror cooperation has come as a big diplomatic win for New Delhi and a big blow for Islamabad which was trying to portray the Hizbul militants as "freedom fighters."

In his individual remark, President Trump said: "The security partnership between the US and India is incredibly important. Both our nations have been struck by the evils of terrorism and we are both determined to destroy terrorist organisations and the radical ideology which drives them. We will destroy radical Islamic terrorism."

The two leaders seemed to have forged a lasting friendship: President Trump himself took Modi on a guided tour of the White House besides sending his daughter, Ivanka, to India for a meeting. On his part, Modi, with President Trump standing beside him, declared that America was India's primary partner for "its social and economic transformation." All this augured well, one thought.

But the recent developments suggest a different American stance. On his first meeting with the US president, Modi had played the Trump card cleverly. With his party BJP already well entrenched in India and spreading its wings in rest of the states, what Modi wants now is full international recognition.

None could have been better than a cordial relationship with America, particularly at a time when China has been openly siding with Pakistan. Prime Minister Modi or, for that matter, the BJP, cannot ignore this and take a soft line with the US in view of the impending general elections next year in India. Modi believes that a stern face would go down well with the electorate. But only time will tell whether he is right or wrong in his judgment.

Kuldip Nayar is an eminent Indian columnist.



US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley addresses a gathering on advancing India-US relations in New Delhi in June 2018.

PHOTO: REUTERS

and other countries in the coming weeks to sell their way of thinking.

For some years, Iran and India have established an understanding in which oil diplomacy did not dictate a particular line. The two have signed a long-term agreement on the supply of oil in exchange of goods that India produced. Although America had imposed sanctions against Iran earlier, it could not persuade India to sever relations with Iran. Things were left at that. Now Trump wants his words to prevail.

Among significant areas of bilateral cooperation in the field of oil and gas, India and Iran had formulated a joint mechanism to promote broad-based cooperation. The two sides had also agreed to explore opportunities for cooperation in defence in agreed areas, including training and exchange of visits. According to the agreement, the India-Iran defence cooperation is not aimed against any third country.

Iran. But it cannot go beyond this because it would hurt India. President Trump in a joint statement with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, following their first meeting at the White House, made terrorism the cornerstone of mutual cooperation between the two countries. The statement went beyond the usual American position and while criticising Pakistan it also echoed Indian concerns regarding the Chinese-led Belt and Road Initiative.

Trump, recalling his election campaign, said that he had pledged true friendship with India. "I pledged that if elected, India would have a true friend in the White House. And that is now exactly what you have, a true friend...I am thrilled to salute you, Prime Minister Modi, and the Indian people for all that you are accomplishing together. Your accomplishments have been vast," said Trump. According to social media, the president also described Prime Minister

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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## Why self-defence is important for women

Almost every woman has endured sexual and physical harassment on Dhaka's streets. Bangladesh is also experiencing a disturbing rise in sexual crimes: a recent study revealed that 17,000 rape cases have been filed in the last four years in the country. What's more troublesome is the fact that women are often blamed for what they endure, and that law enforcement agencies couldn't care less.

Therefore, it's up to women to fight back. They should learn how to defend themselves. Learning self-defence will boost their confidence and ability to thwart or deter potential attacks. It can also break the deeply entrenched social stereotype that women are weaker than men.

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