ENGLISH EDITORIAL

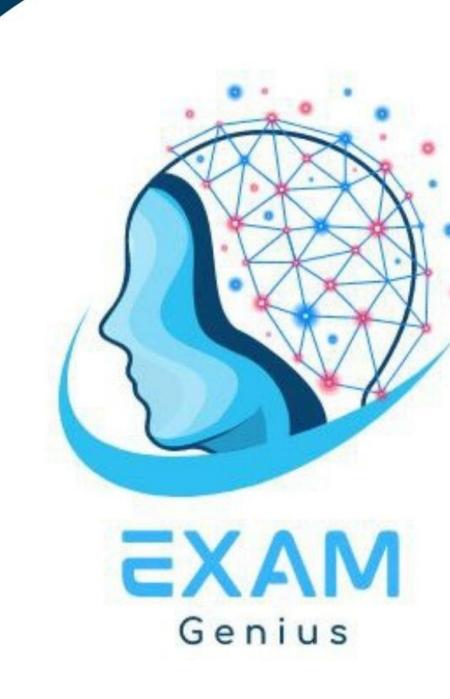
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EDITORIAL 01

<u>Democratic departure: On Joe Biden bowing out of</u> <u>the presidential race</u>

Joe Biden's withdrawal from the race can open up the U.S.

presidential election

With less than four months to go before the 2024 U.S. election and less than one month ahead of the Democratic Party's Convention, incumbent and expected nominee of his party, President Joe Biden (81), has quit the race and in doing so has endorsed his running mate, Vice-President Kamala Harris, for the presidential ticket. Mr. Biden's exit comes after months of Democrats calling for him to step down after public gaffes and fumbles, thought to be linked to his age. His withdrawal caught many, including some within the Democratic Party, off-guard, given that his campaign chair, Jen O'Malley Dillon, had said, "He's not going anywhere." This resolute stance is said to have baffled senior party lawmakers, who, especially after Mr. Biden's disastrous performance when he went toe-to-toe with Republican rival and former President Donald Trump, are said to have privately conveyed to the President that he







ought to make way for a stronger candidate if the Democrats were to have a reasonable chance in the polls.

While the final tally of delegates at the Democratic Convention will determine which candidate ultimately wins the party's nomination for the election, the odds look increasingly strong for Ms. Harris to make history as the U.S.'s first ever Indian-origin and person(woman)-of-colour nominee for President, and the second woman, following Hillary Clinton's run against Mr. Trump in 2016. In terms of the factors favouring Ms. Harris, she is anyway next in line under the U.S. Constitution in terms of official succession; and she would likely gain access to close to \$100 million in campaign funds. On the flip side, she is a relatively less known figure nationally, and Republicans have been quick to label her the custodian of left-wing political values, such as her espousal of reproductive freedom in the face of the Supreme Court ruling against the constitutional right to abortion. Further, surveys suggest that public opinion places her approval at roughly the same level as Mr. Biden's and that would put her a few rungs below Mr. Trump. Nevertheless, the expected response from the Democratic quarter — if they wish to avoid the risky scenario of factional infighting at the Convention — would be for them to







unite around Ms. Harris and her running mate — frontrunners include Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer, California Governor Gavin Newsom and Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. Even in this best-case scenario for Democrats, the Republicans under Mr. Trump appear to be on a far firmer footing to win over independent voters in swing States, the key to overall victory in any U.S. presidential election.

SUMMARY

President Joe Biden has withdrawn from the presidential race, announcing his endorsement of Vice-President Kamala Harris for the presidential ticket. Biden's withdrawal comes after months of Democrats calling for him to step down due to public gaffes and fumbles. Biden's withdrawal caught many off-guard, as his campaign chair, Jen O'Malley Dillon, had said, "He's not going anywhere." Harris is expected to become the first Indian-origin and person(woman)-of-color nominee for President, and the second woman after Hillary Clinton's 2016 run against Trump. She is next in line under the U.S. Constitution and would likely gain access to close to \$100 million in campaign funds. However, her less known nationality and Republican labeling of her as a custodian of left-wing political values may put her a few rungs below Trump.

Vocabulary

1. Incumbent

Synonyms: Current, existing, sitting

Antonyms: Challenger, successor, noncurrent

2. Endorsed

Synonyms: Approved, supported, recommended

Antonyms: Opposed, rejected, disapproved

3. Gaffes

Synonyms: Blunders, mistakes, errors

Antonyms: Accuracies, successes, achievements

4. Baffled

Synonyms: Confused, perplexed, bewildered

Antonyms: Clear, certain, sure









5. Disastrous

Synonyms: Catastrophic, devastating, calamitous

Antonyms: Fortunate, beneficial, successful

6. Custodian

Synonyms: Caretaker, guardian, keeper

Antonyms: Intruder, neglecter, vandal

7. Espousal

Synonyms: Adoption, endorsement, support

Antonyms: Rejection, opposition, abandonment

8. Rungs

Synonyms: Steps, bars, levels

Antonyms: Gaps, spaces, voids







EDITORIAL 02

Quest for quota: On politics and the unrest in Bangladesh

Bangladesh needs to address its booming unemployment crisis

The violent student protests in Bangladesh against the controversial job quota system, which have claimed at least 163 lives, have exposed the fragility of the civil society-state relationship in Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's country, despite her back-to-back election victories. While the trigger was a High Court decision, last month, to reintroduce the old quota system — 56% of government jobs for different categories, including 30% for the descendants of freedom fighters — Ms. Hasina's handling of the crisis made the situation worse. When student protests, backed by the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party, broke out, she dismissed the protesters as Razakars, which is considered to be derogatory as it refers to those who aided the Pakistani military's genocide of locals in erstwhile East Pakistan prior to the creation of Bangladesh. There were also allegations that the student wing of Ms. Hasina's Awami League attacked the protesters, besides police







and paramilitary forces. The crisis spiralled out of control, bringing Dhaka, the megacity of 10.2 million people, to a grinding halt. On Sunday, the Bangladesh Supreme Court scaled back the quota system, offering a major victory to the protesters. The 30% quota has now been brought down to 5%, and remaining reservations to 2%, while 93% government jobs would be open for all Bangladeshis.

The quota system, established in 1972, has been a sensitive issue for years. In 2018, after violent protests, Ms. Hasina scrapped all reservations through an executive order. The protesters' opposition now is driven by both the economic realities of the South Asian nation of 170 million and political concerns. Despite rapid economic growth under Ms. Hasina's leadership, Bangladesh remains a poor country where youth unemployment stands at around 20%. Government jobs are seen as more stable and highly sought after. Growing frustration among the youth has been a social time bomb. The protesters and opposition parties also say the quota system mostly benefits the Awami League, which fought for independence, and helps the ruling party tighten its grip over the bureaucracy. The Supreme Court's order has come as a relief for both sides. Ms. Hasina should be willing to talk to the protesters and opposition leaders to find a lasting solution by reforming the reservation system. The Prime Minister's high-handed style and the persistent hostility between the government and the opposition are also hurting the country's institutions and weakening its political







system. Ms. Hasina should show accountability by ordering an independent investigation into the high number of deaths of protesters. And in the long run, her government should address the booming unemployment crisis, which, if left unchecked, will come back to haunt her one way or the other.

SUMMARY

Bangladesh's student protests against the controversial job quota system have claimed at least 163 lives, highlighting the fragility of the civil society-state relationship in Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's country. The protests, backed by the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party, were triggered by a High Court decision to reintroduce the old quota system, which accounted for 56% of government jobs for different categories. The Bangladesh Supreme Court scaled back the quota system, bringing the 30% quota to 5% and remaining reservations to 2%. The protesters' opposition is driven by economic realities and political concerns, with youth unemployment at around 20%. The government's high-handed style and persistent hostility between the government and opposition are weakening the country's institutions and weakening its political system. Hasina should show accountability by ordering an independent investigation into the high number of protester







deaths and address the booming unemployment crisis in the long run.

Vocabulary

1. Fragility

Synonyms: Delicacy, frailty, brittleness

Antonyms: Strength, robustness, durability

2. Trigger

Synonyms: Activate, initiate, provoke

Antonyms: Halt, stop, suppress

3. Erstwhile

Synonyms: Former, previous, past

Antonyms: Current, present, future

4. Spiralled

Synonyms: Twisted, coiled, whirled

Antonyms: Straightened, unfolded, unrolled





5. Grinding

Synonyms: Crushing, milling, pulverizing

Antonyms: Smoothing, polishing, buffing

6. Sensitive

Synonyms: Delicate, responsive, perceptive

Antonyms: Insensitive, indifferent, unfeeling

7. Scrapped

Synonyms: Discarded, abandoned, rejected

Antonyms: Retained, kept, preserved

8. Persistent

Synonyms: Relentless, tenacious, determined

Antonyms: Fleeting, transient, occasional

9. Hostility

Synonyms: Animosity, antagonism, enmity

Antonyms: Friendliness, amity, goodwill







10. Booming

Synonyms: Thriving, flourishing, vibrant

Antonyms: Declining, faltering, shrinking





