

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF EDUCATION

A 'lost generation' of Rohingya will have nowhere to go

As the International Court of Justice orders Myanmar to take urgent measures to protect the Rohingya, Amnesty International takes a look at what's at stake for the Rohingya children stranded in Bangladesh.



SAAD HAMMADI

As the world observes the International Day of Education today, nearly five million children are growing up in Bangladesh without access to education. These include not just the 4.3 million Bangladeshi children who have not seen the inside of a classroom, but also the half a million Rohingya children who have been languishing in refugee camps in Cox's Bazar.

Whether we talk about the refugees returning to Myanmar when it is safe to do so, resettling in a third country, or another way to solve the crisis, without education, a generation of Rohingya children will lose the opportunity to claim their rights, improve their lives or contribute to the economy they live in. For the past two and a half years, their lives have been put on hold; their futures paralysed by a state of uncertainty.

Some of the Rohingya children, with whom I spoke, were on the verge of completing their schooling in a few months' time when they were forced to flee their homes by the actions of the Myanmar military, many of which amount to crimes against humanity. Since then, they have lost another two academic years. The longer they are forced to stay in the camps, the more distant becomes the prospect of them ever realising the opportunities every child deserves.

They are at risk of becoming a lost generation.

Children in the host community in Cox's Bazar face a similar, forbidding fate. According to a 2018 Rapid Education and Risk Analysis report by the USAID, Cox's Bazar has the lowest percentage of children of primary school age enrolling at first grade in the country at 71 percent, combined with the second highest drop-out rate at 31 percent.

The refugee influx in 2017 has adversely impacted the local economy further; with the cost of living increasing by five to seven times,

skilled teachers have left schools and students have dropped out in Cox's Bazar for employment opportunities in the Rohingya camp, according to a USAID report. All of these have affected continuity of education for children in the host community.

The international community must continue to support Bangladesh and share responsibility of educating all children in Cox's Bazar—Rohingya refugees and the host community as well. Many countries including Canada and the United States are willing to support appropriate, accredited and quality education of children in the Rakhine state in Myanmar and Bangladesh.

However, what's more important for us to see is the consequence of a generation growing up without an education, a generation that will not be able to speak up for themselves, speak out against the violation of their rights, enjoy the benefits of an active and enlightened mind, or lift themselves out of their difficult situation.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, a binding treaty which Bangladesh has ratified, makes clear that education can and should ensure the development of the child's personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential whilst enhancing respect for human rights and preparing them for a responsible life in a free society. The alternative is to risk consigning many of them to a life of poverty and exploitation, including in some cases involvement in serious criminal activities such as drug smuggling, child trafficking or recruitment into violent armed groups.

Thousands of Rohingya children and youth are denied access to education in their villages and towns in Myanmar—where there are no schools and universities for them to attend—as well as in places they have sought refuge. This historic denial of access to education has ultimately pushed the entire Rohingya community behind over time.

We must ask ourselves if it is worth it to live in a world that lets this happen to a community. Perhaps an educated Rohingya can take care of his/her problems better than depending on international assistance



Rohingya refugee children attend an open air Arabic school at Kutupalang Unregistered Refugee Camp, where they learn to read the Quran, in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

PHOTO: REUTERS/MOHAMMAD PONIR HOSSAIN

that continues to shrink globally for refugees.

It is encouraging that the importance of appropriate, accredited and quality education for Rohingya children is acknowledged by some policymakers in Bangladesh. For a country that has prioritised progress on Sustainable Development Goals, achieving Goal 4 (Quality Education) should also be a target. But this needs to come into implementation at the soonest.

One Rohingya youth wrote in a recent opinion piece, "The international community can take action to help generations of Rohingya youth who have been targeted simply for pursuing an education."

We must also ask ourselves whether a country like Bangladesh, which is making strides in economic prosperity, can afford to see a generation stay

behind. Instead, as we encourage rich nations to share responsibility for the crisis that has hit Bangladesh as a result of the refugee influx, the government of Bangladesh must use this moment to improve access to education for all children in Cox's Bazar.

Canada, for instance, has a USD 16 million project dedicated to "Health and Education in Cox's Bazar" which is in operation until July 2023 and a USD 5 million project dedicated to "Strengthening Quality Education for Children in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh", which is operational until November 2021. Both the projects cover access to education of children in the host community and the Rohingya refugees. In September 2019, the United States announced more than USD 127 million in humanitarian assistance including access to education for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh

and Rohingya and members of other affected communities in Myanmar.

All of this support is very welcome but more needs to be done. This is reflected by the fact that the UN-managed Joint Response Plan will have a tentative appeal for about USD 877 million for 2020 to manage the needs of people affected by the refugee crisis.

An appropriate, accredited and quality education that protects the diversity of the social, cultural and linguistic identity of both the Rohingya and host community requires further discussion with respect to both logistics and resources. But this can only happen when the people and the government of Bangladesh acknowledge its importance in principle and show their support.

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When Harry Met Salary

HUMOROUSLY YOURS



NAVEED MAHUB

WHEN Harry met Meghan, two things were set in motion.

First, it was karma. The British royalty, after ruling Africa and America for

centuries, finally got the taste of being ruled by Africa and America.

Second, it was *déjà vu*. Harry had fallen in love with an American just as did His Royal Highness. Harry's love was a divorcee, just as was that of His Royal Highness. Her former husband is alive just as was that of the love of His Royal Highness. The only difference, His Royal Highness was governed by the Church of England and the government itself while Harry was and still is governed by the tabloids, which have been merciless to his love from day one.

Harry is lucky that he is not in

the same predicament as His Royal Highness, King Edward VIII, who, as a sitting king, had to abdicate the throne in order to follow his heart.

Well, so as also not to create a conflict from being the titular head of the Church of England, which, at that time, disapproved the re-marriage of a divorcee while her ex was still alive, and in this case, there were two ex's alive and kicking. Ok, even that wasn't all. His Highness had to contend with the disapproval of the courtship by the then Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin and his government. Harry is lucky again as when he tied the knot with Meghan on May 19, 2018, it was Theresa May who was the PM who herself was screaming "Mayday, Mayday!" about her own self whether she may or may not remain in power and whether Britain may or may not be with the European Union, hence the last thing she or her government, or for that matter, the British public may have cared about, was the royal inclusion of Meghan in May, 2018.

So, one goes through abdication

to avoid a constitutional crisis, while the other goes through an abdication "lite" to avoid a convolitional crisis.

The Queen is mighty mad. Perhaps she had wished the Church of England still yielded the same powers today and that Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his government had less worries in hand to take on more "important" worries such as the royal soap opera. In that case, she could have just given Harry a royal spanking on his (still) royal behind and let the institutions take care of business.

It was so right in the good old days. Just look at it, it was so simple—Edward VIII abdicated, which made his younger brother, an unlikely candidate for the job, to become the King and hence become George VI, which paved the way for his daughter Elizabeth, a royal nobody, to becoming the heir presumptive to becoming the heir apparent and in 1952, to starring in her own coronation, aired on worldwide TV. Uhm, yes indeed, the good old days did have the good old laws.

So, while outwardly, she is annoyed, inwardly, she probably doesn't have much to complain about and lets the grandson join the millions of Bangladeshis in the exodus to Canada. On the brighter side, there are now two less cast members in the *Game of Thrones*.

In their brand new life, Meghan gets a daytime job in the movie industry while Harry prepares to act in the real life sequel, *When Harry Met Salary*.

And little Archie? Oblivious to all the drama, he will one day grow up to perhaps going to a public high school by the name of Riverdale High, driving, at best, a "Jalopy" and with the rage of a revolting teenager, call his dad a Jughead for depriving him of being the richest and coolest kid in the richest and coolest private boarding school in the richest and coolest part Britain. His only solace would be to call up Uncle Elian Gonzalez. Just to help the readers to not having to Google, this is THE famous Elian Gonzalez, who, as a

little kid in 1993, was caught between his father in Havana, Cuba and his paternal family in Miami, Florida, with the end result being that his dad won custody and took him back to Havana. Thus, even when Archie comes to age and calls up his Uncle Elias Gonzales for consolation from what he has missed out on, Elias would still be going through his annual ritual of slamming shut his TV in Havana when seeing *SpringBreak Miami—Girls Go Wild!*

The collective slogan of Archie and Elias. "Yeah, thanks dad!"

Meanwhile, as the dust settles down with Harry, Meghan and Archie settling down in Canada, I wonder where nuptial Americans now stand in the eyes of the British Royals, with not one, but two instances of "I came, I saw, I bowed out."

Naveed Mahub is a former engineer at Ford & Qualcomm USA, the former CEO of IBM & Nokia Networks Bangladesh turned comedian (by choice), the host of ATN Bangla's *The Naveed Mahub Show* and the founder of *Naveed's Comedy Club*. E-mail: Naveed@NaveedMahub.com

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY



JANUARY 24, 2004
Opportunity's Mars landing

Launched in mid-2003, the six-wheeled robotic rover Opportunity landed on Mars this day in 2004 and—like its twin rover, Spirit, which had landed on January 3—analysed rocks and soils and relayed pictures back to Earth.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Sir's counterpart
- 6 Print measures
- 11 "Hello" singer
- 12 Take as one's own
- 13 Bridge costs
- 14 Raft pilot
- 15 S&L offering
- 16 Terrific
- 18 Original
- 19 Polite address
- 20 Unrefined
- 21 Seize
- 23 LBJ, for one
- 25 Toddy ingredient
- 27 Performed
- 28 Arrange
- 30 Corn Belt state
- 33 Simple card

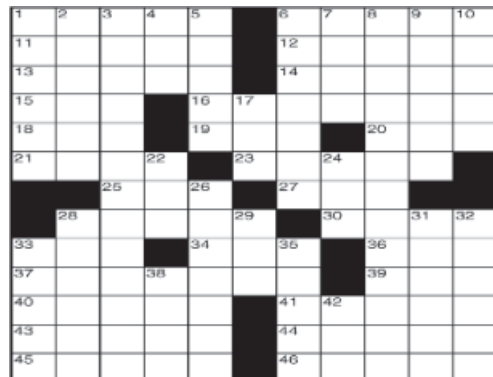
game

- 34 Ricketty boat
- 36 Sewer dweller
- 37 Cave raider of story
- 39 Mamie's mate
- 40 "Separate Tables" star
- 41 Mother of Tiberius
- 43 Calendar entry
- 44 Blissful spots
- 45 Moves quickly
- 46 Private's boss

DOWN

- 1 Winning at the board
- 2 Worshipful one
- 3 Slight from Philadelphia

- 4 Maximum amount
- 5 Buttes' kin
- 6 Did the walls
- 7 Altar exchange
- 8 Slight from Yuma
- 9 Early primate
- 10 Scatter
- 17 Funny fellow
- 22 Except
- 24 Clock numeral
- 26 Wolverine and Storm, e.g.
- 28 Digestive aid
- 29 Place for a pint
- 31 Coming to
- 32 Relaxed
- 33 Dwindled
- 35 Hay bundles
- 38 Crooked
- 42 Writer Tarbell



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

L I M P S C R E W
O D O R A T H O M E
A L S O B R O W S E
N E T S S P E A K
P E T P E E V E
R A V E N S D E N
A L E R T C A G E D
N O N C A T E R S
G E T S M A R T
W E T S S U I T S
R E V E R T N O R A
A V I A R Y E T O N
T E A R Y D A T E

BEETLE BAILEY

by Mort Walker



BABY BLUES

by Kirkman & Scott



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