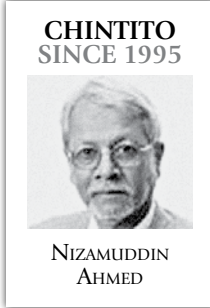


# A life not wasted, nor forgotten



**CHINTITO SINCE 1995**  
NIZAMUDDIN AHMED

**O**CCASIONALLY an athlete transcends the boundaries of his sporting arena and attains a civil personality through his many socio-welfare activities, albeit woven intricately with the game. Add to that the camaraderie of his colleagues, the respect he warrants from his staff, a restrained rapport with politicians of all shades, humbly magnanimous in victory, and you have Badal Roy.

From a twinkle that flickered in laidback Eliotganj in Comilla, Badal Roy dazzled as a football star for the capital's Mohammedan Sporting Club for a decade and two, that is, for the entirety of his career in top flight, winning the league title five times between 1977-89. Incidentally, MSC secured their first league title in 1957, the year Badal Roy was born on July 4.

He was drafted for national duties in 1981, and remained in the red and green colours for half his playing career. His stint as coach of his Mohammedan was bland by comparison, but he was more of an accomplished organiser. For all his travails, he was decorated with the National Sports Award in 2009.

To the "intelligent" striker, prolific scorer, and famously the unselfish goal-assister in the black and white No 10 jersey, Badal played for none other ever, football was his life, and sadly perhaps his death.

The three-term (2008 to 2020) Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) vice-president who exemplified integrity and fairness, was struck by brain haemorrhage in 2017. "I remain immensely grateful to PM (Sheikh Hasina) without whose affection and support my complicated treatment in Singapore was unthinkable", recalled Badal, pausing to add in deep gratitude, "I would not have lived", his voice slurred due to his speech disability and partial paralysis. Despite that difficulty, Badal walked up the four floors to my consulting office three to four times over the last two years.

The idle brain, driven by the devil, assumes often, erroneously always, that a long-term player, and official of Dhaka Mohammedan (derivative of Muslim)

Around that time, I visited Badal's Jagannath Hall room to accept a lasting gift, a pair of running shoes he had brought from his tour abroad, then an infrequent affair.

Unfortunately, the Awami League pick in 1991 national elections for a Comilla constituency, Badal was not returned, but he remained humble in defeat, never a foul word against his political adversaries, even those within his party.

While some nouveau Awami Leaguers distance themselves from Mohammedan Sporting, Badal Roy remained a proud adherent of Nauka along with many in the club during its ups and downs. His love and loyalty for the party and the club were genuine, ingrained in deep-rooted understanding of the philosophy of both.



Badal Roy.

Badal Roy played a pivotal role to steady the love of his life.

"I had money saved for my essential checkup. I told my wife that we have to give that to the (Mohammedan) club because of the need of the hour. Others gave too, but some who genuinely could not," lamented Badal during one of his visits while having his Waver Street house designed by me. On a patch of about three katha, Badal and my office spent hours to fulfil his requirements of comfort and airiness, utility and economy.

Badal Roy was deeply humane. Seeing his demeanour with all and sundry, hearing his exchanges of pleasantries, and observing his reverence for Islamic practices, it was obvious that he did not discriminate among individuals. As for me, I always got a warm "Salaam" and a "Khoda Hafez" from him.

The September BFF elections was further undoing of his health. He was

aspiring to be president, not to reign, but to try and clean the rot, the dormancy. His body said "No", but his mind and soul wanted to mend an organisation, which "does not follow rules and regulations". Badal's heart was literally burning.

"A little effort, Nizam Bhai, and I could have won. But my condition ...", stated a mentally unwavering Badal, who raked almost half the tally despite his withdrawal on health grounds. A swing of 27 votes could have been a befitting prize for his uprightness and dedication.

Our last rickshaw ride together was to where I cannot remember, but the occasion was an election rally for our incumbent club president, the BNP candidate for the Dhaka-10 by-election 2004. Badal and I had gathered at the club, but we two clearly did not fit. As the pageant, marked by banners, bands, and horse carriages, eased out of the club gate, we fell behind inconspicuously, to embark on a three-wheeler to a different destination.

Badal was in a haste to commence with his building. He wanted me to again sit with him and his wife. But, the Covid situation did not permit, although he had somewhat recovered from a bout with the dreaded disease. On November 1 he pleasantly conveyed over phone that he had received our couriered drawings, that there was a developer interested, etc. Four days later, he was again taken ill. On November 22, Badal Roy breathed his last.

Rest in peace, Badal. Someone will surely rise to realise your BFF mission. Lives like yours are never wasted.

Dr Nizamuddin Ahmed is a practising Architect at BashaBari Ltd., a Commonwealth Scholar and a Fellow, a Baden-Powell Fellow Scout Leader, and a Major Donor Rotarian.

*From a twinkle that flickered in laidback Eliotganj in Comilla, Badal Roy dazzled as a football star for the capital's Mohammedan Sporting Club for a decade and two, that is, for the entirety of his career in top flight.*

Sporting, founded 1936, must have political and ideological leaning towards the right. Wrong! For the gen of the ill-informed, half the 30 players of the Shadhin Bangla Football Team, formed in exile during our War of Liberation, were from Mohammedan Sporting.

Furthermore, it was on a Chhatra League ticket that the charismatic Badal Roy, the natural choice as Dhaka University's Sports Secretary, swept the Ducus elections in the mid-1970s.

Badal was kindly critical of a few football colleagues, who made a name through sports but, despite their affluence, later looked the other way when it came to supporting their club. In the aftermath of the government crackdown on club-based casinos in September 2019, Badal and other sports personalities had no part, Mohammedan found themselves at rock bottom organisationally and in a serious crisis financially, as did several other clubs.

# The Muslim world's changing dynamics

## Pakistan struggles to retain its footing



JAMES M DORSEY

**I**NCREASING strains between Pakistan and its traditional Arab allies, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, is about more than Gulf states opportunistically targeting India's

far more lucrative market. At the heart of the tensions, which potentially complicate Pakistan's economic recovery, is also India's ability to enhance Gulf states' capacity to hedge their bets amid uncertainty about the continued US commitment to regional security.

India is a key member of the Quad that also includes the United States, Australia and Japan, and could play a role in a future, more multilateral regional security architecture in the Gulf.

Designed as the backbone of an Indo-Pacific strategy intended to counter China across a swath of maritime Asia, Gulf states are unlikely to pick sides but remain keen on ensuring that they maintain close ties with both sides of the widening divide.

The mounting strains with Pakistan are also the latest iteration of a global battle for Muslim religious soft power that pits Saudi Arabia and the UAE against Turkey, Iran, and Asian players like Indonesia's Nahdlatul Ulama, the world's largest Islamic movement.

A combination of geo- and domestic politics is complicating efforts by major Muslim-majority states in Asia to walk a middle line. Pakistan, home to the world's largest Shiite Muslim minority, has reached out to Turkey while seeking to balance relations with its neighbour, Iran.

The pressure on Pakistan is multi-fold. Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan charged recently that the United States and one other unidentified



Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

PHOTO: AFP

country were pressing him to establish diplomatic relations with Israel. Pakistani and Israeli media named Saudi Arabia as the unidentified country. Representing the world's second most populous Muslim nation, Pakistani recognition, following in the footsteps of the UAE and Bahrain, would be significant.

Pakistan twice in the last year signalled a widening rift with the kingdom.

Mr Khan had planned to participate a year ago in an Islamic summit hosted by Malaysia and attended by Saudi Arabia's detractors, Turkey, Iran and Qatar, but not the kingdom and a majority of Muslim states. The Pakistani prime minister cancelled his participation at the last moment under Saudi pressure.

More recently, Pakistan again challenged Saudi leadership of the Muslim world when Foreign Minister

Shah Mahmood Qureshi complained about lack of support of the Saudi-dominated Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for Pakistan in its conflict with India over Kashmir. The OIC groups the world's 57 Muslim-majority nations. Mr Qureshi suggested that his country would seek to rally support beyond the realm of the kingdom.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, on a visit to Pakistan earlier this year, made a point of repeatedly reiterating his country's support for Pakistan in the Kashmir dispute.

By openly challenging the kingdom, Mr Qureshi was hitting Saudi Arabia where it hurts most as it seeks to repair its image tarnished by allegations of abuse of human rights, manoeuvres to get off on the right foot with incoming US President-elect Joe Biden's administration, and fends

off challenges to its leadership of the Muslim world.

Pakistan has not helped itself by recently failing to ensure that it would be removed from the grey list of the Financial Action Task Force, an international anti-money laundering and terrorism finance watchdog, despite progress in the country's legal infrastructure and enforcement.

Grey listing causes reputational damage and makes foreign investors and international banks more cautious in their dealings with countries that have not been granted a clean bill of health.

Responding to Mr Qureshi's challenge, Saudi Arabia demanded that Pakistan repay a USD 1 billion loan extended to help the South Asian nation ease its financial crisis. The kingdom has also dragged its feet on renewing a USD 3.2 billion oil credit facility that expired in May.

In what Pakistan will interpret as UAE support for Saudi Arabia, the Emirates last week included Pakistan on its version of US President Donald J Trump's Muslim travel ban.

Inclusion on the list of 13 Muslim countries whose nationals will no longer be issued visas for travel to the UAE increases pressure on Pakistan, which relies heavily on exporting labour to generate remittances and alleviate unemployment.

Some Pakistanis fear that a potential improvement in Saudi-Turkish relations could see their country fall through geopolitical cracks.

In the first face-to-face meeting between senior Saudi and Turkish officials since the October 2018 killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul, the two countries' foreign ministers, Prince Faisal bin Farhan and Mevlut Cavusoglu, held bilateral talks this weekend, on the sidelines of an OIC conference in the African state of Niger.

"A strong Turkey-Saudi partnership benefits not only our countries but the whole region," Mr Cavusoglu tweeted after the meeting.

The meeting came days after Saudi King Salman telephoned Mr Erdogan on the eve of a virtual summit hosted by the kingdom of the Group of 20 (G20) that brings together the world's largest economies.

"The Muslim world is changing and alliances are shifting and entering new, uncharted territories," said analyst Sahar Khan.

Added Imtiaz Ali, another analyst: "In the short term, Riyadh will continue exploiting Islamabad's economic vulnerabilities... But in the longer term, Riyadh cannot ignore the rise of India in the region, and the two countries may become close allies—something that will mostly likely increase the strain on Pakistan-Saudi relations."

Dr James M Dorsey is an award-winning journalist and a senior fellow at Nanyang Technological University's S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore and the National University of Singapore's Middle East Institute.

## ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

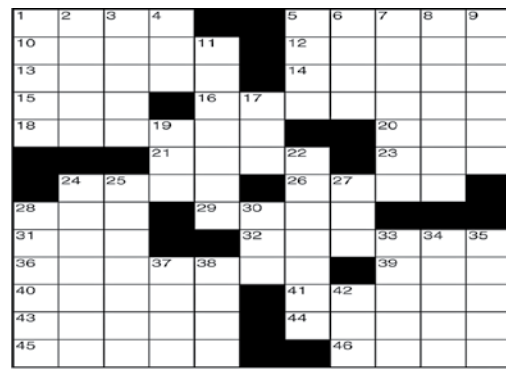


**DECEMBER 3, 1984**  
Gas leak in Bhopal, India

On this day in 1984, a gas leak from a Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, India, spread over a populated area, resulting ultimately in 15,000 to 20,000 deaths and leaving some half million survivors with chronic medical ailments.

## CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Sacred chests
  - 5 Archaeologist's find
  - 9 Cruller's kin
  - 11 Poppy yield
  - 13 Love to pieces
  - 14 Wild dog
  - 15 Kitten cry
  - 16 Appended
  - 18 "My bad!"
  - 20 Take to court
  - 21 Wander off
  - 22 Lawyer: Abbr.
  - 23 Bowler, e.g.
  - 24 "That's obvious!"
  - 25 Lively folk dance
  - 27 Trait carriers
  - 29 overhead trains
  - 30 Rudely interrupts
  - 32 Use an easy chair
  - 34 Pot fill
  - 35 Skirt
  - 36 Cricket, for one
  - 38 Audacity
  - 39 Caesar's land
  - 40 Must have
  - 41 Blue hue
  - DOWN**
  - 1 Washington successor
  - 2 Western contests
  - 3 Is discriminating
  - 4 California's Big-
  - 5 Rum drink
  - 6 Mayberry kid
  - 7 Is in charge temporarily
  - 8 Leave in hurry
  - 10 Attack, in a way
  - 12 Bucks
  - 17 Use a towel
  - 19 Vaccine type
  - 22 Polly or Em
  - 24 Hate
  - 25 Showed over
  - 26 Late hour
  - 27 Colt creation
  - 28 Western range
  - 30 Awaited
  - 31 Birth related
  - 33 Exist
  - 37 Sulky state



## YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



## BEETLE BAILEY

BY MORT WALKER



## BABY BLUES

BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT



WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO dsopinion@gmail.com.