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Flawed cricket!

I've been following our cricket team's performances closely over the recent months and have noticed one unbelievable fault that everybody has overlooked so far -- our team lacks presence! How else can a player like Andrew Flintoff, who is anything but consistent, can have such a grip on our team.

One improvement in our team has been its ability to bowl opponents out in Test cricket which has been reflected in the scorecards with Pakistan and England (the 1st Test). I believe it is because the opponents are looking to defend, or at least they are not being aggressive. However, in ODIs the batsmen are aggressive and our bowlers crumble quickly.

Then comes the batsmen, yet again in the Test matches their ultra defensive attitude works, for a while, unless Shoaib Akther decides to say enough is enough and becomes aggressive, 301-2 to 361 all out.

All that was due to some aggression from one man? He didn't bowl any different, he didn't get ultra fast, he just bowled a little faster and the "Tigers" ran away like pussycats.

In Australia, Bangladesh put together one good innings, 290-odd and we had a good series? Please don't forget that Australia had 550+ for just 4 wickets in reply. I blame it all



PHOTO: AFP

on presence, we have no presence out there, it's like we're privileged to play in test matches or ODIs whilst forgetting we earned the right to play at that level.

How many more ODIs do we need to play before we set targets of at least 230+, instead of being pleased by just getting close to 200?

How many times do we need to lose our wickets to Anderson, Flintoff etc. after, yes after, scoring fifties and hundreds against Shoaib Akther, Brett Lee and Glenn McGrath. It's all in presence, we are just too small in stature and too overwhelmed by the word "big".

Now to the solution. The whole team should be sent to the gym and made to work out 3-4 times a week, in a demanding muscle and stamina building routine, and even if we can't get any taller, we'll definitely be bigger, stronger and less vulnerable. Only then the consistent 20-30s in ODIs will turn into 70-

80s and even 100. The bats, pads, gloves look horribly oversized on our players. Maybe that's why we shy away from aggression without any resistance. For the future players too, it's an ultra fit world of sports out there and just talent won't do. Bangladesh has always overlooked

physical fitness. It's time to change that attitude since we've managed to reach the top 10 in one global sport.

A diehard cricket fan, New Jersey, USA

Top and tail, the same?

Day by day, it is becoming quite impossible for the spectators and also for the critics to differentiate the top order batsmen from the tail-enders of our cricket team.

In almost every match, the top four or five batsmen scored almost nothing or a very negligible number of runs. The wickets start falling right from the beginning and the procession continues until it takes a disastrous look, like 10/3, 20/5, 55/7 etc.

Certainly, you switch off your television because you dare not see your beloved team scoring the measly runs. After some time, when you switch on the TV with utter timidity to have a look on the score you find Bangladesh striving to make a decent (!) total like 120-150.

No wonder, it is the tail-enders' whole-hearted contribution that saves the team's image again and again. The lower order batsmen are really doing a good job for the team. Their bowling has also improved and they are able to grab a couple of wickets in every match. Is there any necessity to recruit more batsmen?

Rifat Mahbub, Dhaka University



Words from B Chowdhury

Prof Dr. Badruddoza Chowdhury has opened his mouth at last. He has highlighted some facts of our political and social life. Actually, this country is in need of good politicians like him.

We have already tested the two major political parties and both of them have failed to deliver. It's time for the politicians like B Chowdhury to come forward.

Nazmus Saquib
Mayakanan, Dhaka

I have read the news about Prof. Badruddoza Choudhury's speaking on the current state of affairs. What I don't understand is why did he have to speak out like this now? He never tried to set things right when he was a member of the BNP.

There is no doubt that the country's political leadership is stuck in the quagmire of poor governance. The ruling alliance made many mistakes from the very beginning, not the least of which was the size of the cabinet. Wasn't Mr. Choudhury then busy seeking for himself the office of the president, caring less about the mistakes that his party was making?

As president, let's not forget facts, the professor was busy cutting tapes, opening functions and lecturing on issues of politics that was hardly his business.

I, for one, felt at that time that his love of the limelight was creating grounds for a showdown between him and the prime minister.

No one doubts his credentials as a man and a politician. This is why many of us were indeed surprised that he, as everyone knows, sought the post of president. He should not have done that because he was needed in the party and the post of the president was hardly one where such a talent as his should have been wasted.

More importantly, the present messing up of things by the government is attributable to the absence of mature politicians like him in the ruling alliance. Mr. Choudhury should have stayed on in the party and together with his senior colleagues, like the finance minister, worked out the problems facing the country. The elected leaders, not those deriving political clout from sources undemocratic, are supposed to lead the country.

My reaction to Mr. Choudhury's press conference is that it will, coming in the wake of the Awami League's threat to create a law and order situation to bring down the government, create a condition tantamount to a gridlock from which all of us will suffer. I wish Mr. Choudhury had acted earlier within the party when the symptoms of what he is picturing now were clearly visible.

Shahjahan Ahmed
Dhanbandhi R/A, Dhaka

Utopian thoughts?

I am bemused by the letter of Ms Samiha Esha published on November 13. She seems to be over concerned about the mushroom growth of shopping malls, and the huge profit made by businessmen in the process.

Undoubtedly, we need greater spending on health and infrastructure but would the business class (in this country at least) really want to forgo abnormal profits and concentrate on charity? Hospitals in the West are a different issue, but we all know that in this country the medical sector is one of the most neglected ones. The DMCH and most of the other government hospitals are better left not talked about, as they often hit the headlines for utter neglect of patients, inadequate facilities and revolting nurses and doctors.

The story of private hospitals is even more intriguing, because a visit to such a place means a lot of cash outflow for the unfortunate 'ill'; sometimes along with completely wrong diagnosis. One has to resort to 'Mount Elizabeth' or 'Tata Memorial' as the only viable alternative.

Ms Esha seems to believe like a Utopian that the players in the shopping mall business would, all of a sudden, divert funds to building 'good quality' hospitals.

Perhaps they would, but what would be the outcome of it? They'd be charging more (come on, it's of "Mount Elizabeth" standard, and one MUST pay accordingly), and we would be facing the same doctors who prescribe antacid for ANY pain in the chest, and so on. Even if we get good doctors, they'd be charging very high rates because the hospitals would be 'standardised'.

Ultimately, the purpose of a private institution would be achieved, i.e. high revenue generation. So, how different is the shopping mall business from running hospitals? Both would mean an influx of money to the investors, and I personally think that the shopping mall delivers greater value because it doesn't put the lives of people at a risk. Nonetheless, there ARE a few good hospitals in the country and I don't want to undermine their positions in any way.

Ms Esha should be mature enough to realise that the health sector in a country like ours should primarily be the concern of the government. Israel has produced good soldiers and scientists, so what? That doesn't absolve it of the sins that it is committing against humanity.

because the private sector would only cater to the people who can afford expensive treatment. And I wonder how many people can afford that. Undoubtedly, Ms Esha's benevolent thoughts aren't restricted to the 'rich elite' only.

Nonetheless, everyone has a right to speech and I eagerly wait to watch our profit-hungry businessmen creating 'values' for the entire society as proposed by Ms Esha.

Non-Utopian
Institute of Business Administration, Dhaka

For better classrooms

I am responding to a November 14 article, "Government to set up 2,540 more primary schools" and an October 14 article that said 30,000 new classrooms would be built under the new PEDP-II. The school construction projects should be viewed as an opportunity to think about education sector innovations with low cost and great impact.

Bangladesh has produced some of the world's most creative architects and they should be encouraged to contribute to its development. Examples already exist at the village level -- look at the country mosques which show how to create airy, open environments using large gridded windows. While fathers pray in serene and breezy rooms, their children attend some of the darkest and depressing classrooms -- I have not seen anything like that anywhere in the world.

Use your architectural genius and great Islamic heritage to design low-cost classrooms, using readily available materials that are open and airy. Hold a competition to find a design that will uplift children's spirits.

If any country has the capacity to develop beautiful, yet low-cost classroom structures that symbolise quality environments for learning, it is Bangladesh! Other countries will look to your example and your children will be treated with the dignity they deserve.

Deborah Llewellyn
EDC and Primary Education Consultant, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Fully agreed with the Cambridge scholar

Israel has produced good soldiers and scientists, so what? That doesn't absolve it of the sins that it is committing against humanity.

Ms Esha should be mature enough

Shazib
One-mail

Attention, BTV

On 14 Nov, BTV telecast the movie "The Message". The movie ended with a recitation of "Khutbatul Wida". The movie, and specially its ending, created a beautiful trance in almost all the viewers. Surprisingly, it was immediately followed by some fabric advertisement in which a girl was posing in a style alien to most people in this country.

I want to request the BTV authorities to please show respect to such programmes and maintain the sanctity of our religion for at least a few minutes. However, for airing this movie and other religious programmes in the month of Ramadan, the BTV deserves appreciation.

Zeehan Faisal
Mirpur, Dhaka

Phone tapping, invasion of privacy

A parliamentary committee's decision to endorse legislation that would allow the Bangladeshi authorities to intercept and tap phone calls and e-mails is bound to lead to abuse of power and is unlikely to help track criminals.

While it is conceivable that under certain special circumstances the authorities may need to monitor the phones and the e-mails of suspected terrorists, it should be specifically warranted and authorised by an independent court, headed by a qualified and impartial judge, to ensure that the authorities do not engage in the abuse of the state's surveillance capabilities.

If the authorities are really serious about apprehending criminals in Bangladesh, all they need to do is to identify various gangsters and godfathers and charge them with the well known record of their criminal activities. People in every neighbourhood in Bangladesh know the criminals, their history, and their victims.

More often than not, these criminals are protected by powerful politicians and bureaucrats. The proposed laws are but an invasion of people's right to privacy.

There is something grotesque in giving the state the authority to violate people's privacy. With rampant corruption, such powers are likely to be

Of notes and coins

We may be having too many types in each of the denominations of our currency notes and coins. According to one estimate, we may be having anything between two to five types of notes/coins for any particular denomination! For example, there are at least four types of Tk 500 notes, at least three types of Tk 100 notes, at least four types of Tk 50 notes and so on.

Without going into the blame game and details of how we ended up in a situation like this, perhaps it would suffice to say that it is not at all desirable to have too many types of legal tenders of the same value.

Ideally, there should be only one type of currency note and coin for one type of denomination for a reasonable period of time, if not permanently. Too many types for the same denomination tend to create confusion and are also expensive. May be it also reflects on the respectability of the central Bank.

The bank can take the initiative to make permanent/semi-permanent designs for all our currency notes and coins so that with every change of government, currency notes/coins do not change so easily.

Syed Farhat Ahmad Roomy, New DOHS, Dhaka



PHOTO: AFP

abused. The proposed legislation will hamper the free flow of information and ideas.

Therefore, it should be challenged by every human rights activists as well as digital technology groups and firms in the country. Why is it that our political parties, including the opposition parties, are silent about this? Perhaps they, too, dream of abusing state power against the people when they attain power. I strongly urge all to oppose this legislation.

Tanweer Akram
Arlington, USA

DS news coverage

This is in response to Mr. Shahjahan

Ahmed's letter "Is The Daily Star anti-establishment?" (Star- Friday, Oct 31st).

The problem is not so much whether it is anti-establishment, but the problem with this newspaper is that it seems to cover every item of news, irrespective of its social and political consequences.

M Ahmed
One-mail

"Indian editor, four journalists jailed"

The above captioned news item published in The Daily Star on November 9 was really shocking. The editors and

four journalists of a prominent daily like 'The Hindu' had been sentenced to jail. Their fault? They published a news article criticising the government for showing 'rising intolerance'.

In a country which takes pride as the world's largest democracy, such an event is really surprising. In contrast, media in Bangladesh seems to enjoy much more freedom and independence. Can anybody cite a single incident, that took place in Bangladesh during the last 10-12 years, where a journalist was prosecuted for just criticising the government?

Md. Helal Uddin
Lalmatia, Dhaka

Taslima Nasrin's "Ka"

Taslima Nasrin has appeared in the media once again with her latest piece "Ka". She always likes to be in the limelight and has succeeded in her mission by presenting selected and inevitably controversial stories, novels etc. at different times.

"Ka", claims Taslima, is an autobiography. But the way she has revealed her personal affairs with some of our renowned intellectuals and writers is highly objectionable. This novel is a bit pornographic in nature. With hardly credible stories, crude dialogues and erotic narration, she has acted out her own sexual fantasies. I don't know whether this novel has got any literary value, but it is an example of her moral degradation.

In literature, sexuality is accepted but it has its limits. Taslima Nasrin has exceeded all the limits. She only divulged some facts about herself. It is funny that she has stigmatized some people who always appreciated her and stood by her side during the worst days of her life. One of them has already filed a defamation case against her for the lurid story.

In a civil society, everybody has a private life

and he/she has to maintain it. In our private and social life many things happen beyond our expectation and calculation. Is it necessary to divulge those in public?

MF Bari, Khulna

I have been keenly following the various comments and reports published in the DS and other newspapers on the above subject. At the very outset, let me say that I am still at ease with this kind of literary exercises.

Having said that, I would like to state that the novel by Syed Shamsul Haque titled "Khelaram Khele Ja" was no less sleazy in its contents than what Taslima Nasrin has produced. The only difference is that she has mentioned Mr. Huq, one of our otherwise well-established literary figures, by name.

I have not gone through the entire contents of the book but whatever I could gather from the excerpts read out to me by some of my friends over phone, I understand that her book also contains similar remarks about a few other literary giants. Under the circumstances, I fail to understand why Mr. Huq alone filed the defa-

mination suit.

On the other hand, while filing the case he did not hint at the stories narrated being false or fabricated. To me, it came as a shock and surprise when in an interview with the BBC he said, "Matters like these are also irreligious". It is indeed "heartening" to know that Mr. Huq has a keen understanding and appreciation of the core values and the philosophy of our religion.

As I understand, Taslima Nasreen is a persona non-grata in Bangladesh. Therefore, she can neither come here nor "defend" her position. It thus stands to reason that Mr. Huq is has taken this path in order to "clear" his name of the controversy once and for all, and at the same time create a kind of tremor in society which may ultimately end up enhancing his own popularity.

Finally, I would like to point out, by way of inference that, not too long ago, it was the likes