chintito

The Algebra of Cricket

CHINTITO

A long time ago while walking by Comilla Stadium towards Our Lady of Fatima Convent School I overheard two older boys vigorously discussing Algebra, and that 'x' was this and why should 'y' not be deducted from the sum, and so forth. I really quite did not understand what the fuss was all about. I even managed a wry smirk. I mean if 'a' was 2 and 'b' was 3, adding the two would make the result 'five'. How difficult could that be? I was more or less convinced that I would take up this mathematical branch by the scruff of its neck when I reached their age. Only a few years later I realised that a zebra had more stripes than one could count.

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By another measure, on the field as our skipper he had kept us skipping on this side of the river by his rollercoaster performance. A nifty fifty was almost always followed by what seemed to be a fifty-innings dry spell. As captain his pre- and post-match speeches punctuated with ifs and buts had compelled us to compose pieces that patriotism did not allow us to publish. Here follows an example:

"Decades ago, oh what a visionary man he was, my teacher at college told us that 'sorry' was a cheap word in the English dictionary. Alas, our cricket captain, forlorn he may have appeared on arrival at Dhaka four days after his charge, could not have a chosen a cheaper excuse in defence of his distinctive tactics of providing the lone Irishman at slips catching practice after being given a life at the same position in the T20 match that should have seen Bangladesh in the Super Eight round. Not all living beings appreciate a life.

"Before a series our captain goes robotic: We have had a good preparation. If we do well in batting, if our bowlers bowl well, if we field well, we think we can beat them. Apart from those three do-ables there is not much to be done on a cricket field.

"After a series too our captain goes robotic: We did bat well. Our front/middle/rear (choose one) order did not perform well. Otherwise, the result of the match could have been otherwise.

"Now hear this BCB, this Ashraful *chakkar* has to stop once and for all. We have heard the same CD/DVD played before and after every series."

Well, the guys who manage cricket Bangladesh have as much sense as this scribe and almost anyone else following the game, and so they did retain him as a batsman and part-time bowler which are really his talent laden domains, and asked Mash to talk to the press. His muscle also spoke up and the job landed on Sakib's lap. And boy! Has the lad not been giving more than one hundred percent?

That brings us to the question what does more than one hundred percent mean, and is it possible? An email from a friend threw sufficient light on the percentage issue, and now I am only that much learned. The mail read:

What Makes 100%? What does it mean to give MORE than 100%? Ever wonder about those people who say they are giving more than 100%? We have all been to those meetings where someone wants you to give over 100%. How about achieving 103%? What makes up 100% in life?

Here's a little mathematical formula that might help you answer these questions. If a=1, b=2, and so forth until z=26, then H-A-R-D-W-O-R-K would add up to 98% (8+1+18+4+23+15+18+11). We find that K-N-O-W-L-E-D-G-E is 96% (11+14+15+23+12+5+4+7+5), but A-T-T-I-T-U-D-E is 100% (1+20+20+9+20+21+4+5) and B-U-L-L-S-H-I-T is 103% (2+21+12+12+19+8+9+20).

And, look how far feet kissing will take you. F-E-E-T-K-I-S-S-I-N-G, numerically represented 6+5+5+16+12+9+19+19+9+14+7=121%

So, one can conclude with mathematical certainty, that while Hard work and Knowledge will get you close, and Attitude will get you there, it's the Bullshit and Feet kissing that will put you over the top.

That is to say that life on the other side of a river does look more comfortable. See in our talk shows how every talker has a solution, a neat possible and feasible solution to problems from *haor*, power, shower (I mean water) and the lot, but only when he or she is not a minister. As soon as they get a portfolio, they can feel how heavy the task is, what a big responsibility has to be shouldered.

So Ashraful, we are elated that you lost your captaincy and are back in the runs. We are pleased to hear that our ministers have been advised to be economic with the gab. And I am mighty glad that someone else is doing the algebra and I am only typing a, b, c...