

## ENIGMATTERS

# All is not over, I hope



MOHAMMAD ALI SATTAR

**M**Y editor was so saddened by the inglorious exit of the Tigers from the Cricket World Cup that his pen did not move to write the

obituary. I am also hurt, rather deeply wounded and intensely perturbed by the last defeat of the team. Still I write to tell you that all is not over. The young boys have shown flicker of hope in the four out of six games that they played. It was a calamity against the West Indies and a tragedy against the South Africans.

Let's resurrect from the calamity and put tragedy behind. Like they say, put things behind and look forward. We have no alternative than to do just that. Every match played is history but we can't forget the past debacles and should learn from history. We'll have to make it up and learn religiously.

We played six matches; the outcome, fifty-fifty. Not bad. There were many positives as there were negatives. We shall not gain by reproving the players. But we should have words of caution for them.

The positives were improved fielding, catches held with confidence, the art of batting, Tamim, Kayes, Junaed, Shafiqul and Riyad all played shots from the books. Our main concern was the pace bowling. We were actually without a pace attack. Rubel and Shafiqul were only tentative posing no threat to any batsmen. Team selection and batting order could have been better.

If Ashrafal was included in the squad, he should have been played against the South Africans. That was the crunch game. He might have exploded for one last time. Although he is at his ebb, nevertheless, he is the only Bangladeshi batsman with all kinds of shots in his batting arsenal.

You should always gamble with the best.

The glaring weakness of our batters was their inability to negotiate pace attacks. At times they looked like onlookers as ball zoomed passed by them. They didn't know what to do. They were simply lost.

yards at more than 90 miles or nearly 100 miles an hour.

The hope of reaching the quarter finals perhaps was not a big dream. We were unfortunate second time. We have to traverse a long way. The skill that is needed to be competitive in international arena is lacking. Our

their physical condition) and all other technical aspects, hiring of local experts (former players should be first priority) to assist the Board on technical matters would be a wise decision. Foreign coaches are no problem but they should deliver.

BCB should try and bring legendary Imran Khan as the Chief Development Consultant for as long as possible. He should be specially invited to Dhaka to watch the upcoming series between Bangladesh and the Aussies. He should be able to give our players, trainers and board members the right advice to lift up our cricket. If Shakib (or whoever after him), wants success as a skipper and player he has a fast track learning method. Just read Imran Khan's cricketing history and watch his videos that should help you to master the game and the art of leadership.

It is only Imran Khan who has shown the world that he has the best cricketing brain and leadership quality. He was a bundle of confidence that did not break down at times of crisis. He knew the art of harnessing talents. If cricket is a mind game, he was best at it. Till today he is revered by all other legends, former or current.

Players should also undergo regular training and counseling on matters relating to psychology and language. I thought Shakib should have been given proper briefing before meeting the press each time. How can the Board be so indifferent to such sensitive things like meeting the press? If that is our culture, it's time we change it.

Amidst continued poverty in our sports arena, cricket is the only hope. To keep this hope alive we need a sincere BCB that will rise above all political differences and petty interests. Arrogance of power destroys all, individuals and institutions.

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PHOTO: STAR

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Let's be blunt. No batsmen in the world are comfortable with fast bowling. Medium pacers are easy to play and spinners are negotiable in that you don't have to fear the pace in them. Batsmen like Javed Miandad, Inzamam, Brian Lara or Desmond Haynes were never comfortable with genuine pace bowling. It took them some time to settle down. Even today's heroes like Sachin Tendulkar, Virender Sehwag, Graeme Smith or Shane Watson are tentative during the initial overs that they face. It's not easy to deal with something speeding at you from a distance of only 22

boys are very young. Let them rise brick by brick. Let's not shower gratuitous praises on them. Let them be what they are as humans; only help them to be better players. Cash or kind, don't give them what they don't need to be given. Heaping praises and condemnation all surpassed normal limits.

The task ahead is uphill. Bangladesh Cricket Board should sit with all heads together and chart out brand new schemes to further performances of players. Talent hunt, training the probable, boosting the present squad (with special attention to

## Speaker is right to be upset

*Must we forget our manners?*

**W**E can only commiserate with the Speaker of the Jatiyo Sangshad for his frustration at the way some members of the parliament have conducted themselves in the House, and has vented his displeasure, rightly. It is for the second time in as many weeks that we have commented on the issue. To say the least, the standard of debate in the Sangshad that we have been unfortunately exposed to recently has left us dumb-founded.

And for many of those that had taken to watching the proceedings of the parliament on the TV have chosen of late not to do so fearing the adverse impact it might have on their children.

We all feel embarrassed, and we are sure the honourable members of the parliament do too, at the use of indecent words about fellow parliamentarians. Listening to the tone and tenor of the speeches of some of the members of the parliament it appears that there is perhaps an effort to outdo one another in invectives, vituperation and broadsides that have crossed not only the limit of parliamentary decorum but also civilised norms.

And the Whips must take seriously the words of the Speakers that they are allowing time to those members of their respective parties who make it a point to use unprintable epithets about their opponents. And even worse, such remarks are cheered by the party MPs.

We understand that expunging the remarks of the lawmakers is not a palatable job, and it is not an end in itself, which must ensure that such attitude is abjured by the parliamentarians. We fear that if things continue in such a vein there may be very little left of the proceedings after deleting the unparliamentary remarks of the members. We emphasise that the parliament members are elected leaders of the people and many look up to them to set examples of uprightness, honesty, and sobriety. We must say that the goings-on in the house have disappointed us in this regard.

## Torture of domestic workers

*Formalise sector to prevent abuse*

**W**e express deep concern over the repeated stories of torture against domestic workers, the latest reported case that of nine-year-old Baby in Khulna, who was not only underfed but also allegedly beaten by her employers with sticks and electric wires. As is often the case, the child's parents were unable to file a case and Baby saved herself the only way she could, by running away. Not all domestic workers are as lucky, however. Numerous cases have been reported where they have borne inhuman torture, some of them allegedly murdered and others forced to commit suicide.

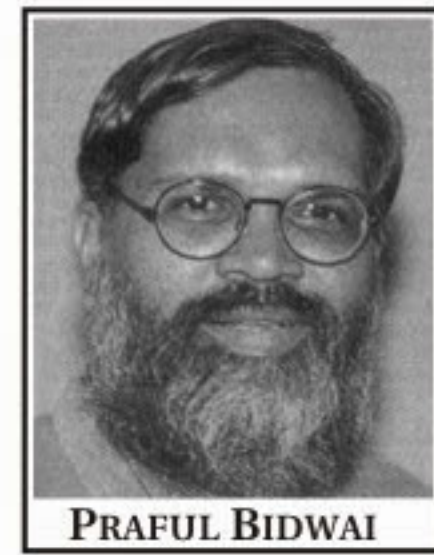
All this is despite the High Court ruling last month declaring all forms of violence, torture and repression on domestic help as well as employing children under the age of 12, illegal. The court also provided a number of other directives to ensure rights of domestic workers.

A Baseline Survey on Child Domestic Labour (CDL) in Bangladesh conducted by the International Labour Organization in 2006 revealed that there were approximately two million domestic workers in Bangladesh, 12.7 percent of them children and the majority of them women and girls. The unorganised and informal nature of the sector makes it difficult to monitor it, however, and for every horror story reported in the media, there may well be many untold ones.

Human rights organisations have constantly demanded that domestic work be included in the country's labour laws to ensure basic rights of workers such as working hours, minimum wages, holidays, etc. The government is said to have already formulated a policy for elimination of child labour and drafted a policy for protection of domestic workers. We urge the quick and effective implementation of these measures, sensitisation programmes for both employers and workers and a strong monitoring mechanism to be put in place to protect the basic human rights of domestic workers.

## PRAFUL BIDWAI COLUMN

# Lessons from Fukushima



PRAFUL BIDWAI

**O**N Day 1 (March 12),

they dismissed it as a minor accident. On Day 2, when there was an explosion at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant, they denied it was an emergency "as described by [the] media." One of them described it as "a well-planned emergency preparedness programme." On Day 3, as the crisis worsened, they maintained it would be over soon.

The first person quoted above is Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) Secretary and Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) Chairman Sreekumar Banerjee. The second one is S.K. Jain, Chairman of the Nuclear Power Corporation.

The DAE bosses' statements show their dogma prevents them from acknowledging hard facts -- such as a loss-of-coolant accident (LOCA) in the Fukushima reactors that overheated them, causing explosions and releasing large quantities of lethal radioactivity into the air that could kill thousands of people.

It is ironic that the Fukushima crisis has come close to the 25th anniversary of Chernobyl (April 26). This crisis is in some ways graver than the Ukraine disaster, which could be attributed to flawed designs and shoddy operating procedures in an industrially backward society. Fukushima cannot be. Japan's nuclear safety standards are globally the best.

Although Japan's nuclear power generation programme has been troubled with accidents, including explosions, never before has a nuclear accident assumed catastrophic dimensions.

That has now happened, in a nuclear power station with six reactors designed by a US company,

General Electric, and operated by Tokyo Electric Power Company, among the largest nuclear power companies worldwide.

To understand the context of the Fukushima disaster, we must recall the effects of earlier crises. Three Mile Island (1979) paralysed the US nuclear industry. It was already in trouble, having not had a single new reactor order since 1973. Three Mile Island led to tighter safety regulations and further raised the already-high costs of reactors, and hence of nuclear power. Not a single new reactor has been licensed there.

Then came Chernobyl, crippling the European nuclear industry. The market's confidence in nuclear power generation, always low, collapsed. No new reactor has been constructed in the past 25 years in Europe, due to growing public opposition to exorbi-

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tant nuclear power. The few existing nuclear projects are all in trouble, led by the European Pressurised Reactor developed by France's Areva, now under construction in Finland.

The EPR is 42 months behind schedule, 90% over budget, and faces 3,000 safety questions from nuclear regulators. If the project is abandoned because of high and rising costs, and bitter litigation, it could end nuclear power expansion in Europe.

The Japanese disaster could precipitate a terminal crisis for the global nuclear industry. Already, Switzerland has cancelled plans for three reactors. Germany has to prolong the phase-out of nuclear power. Other countries are likely to follow. Even France, which gets more than three-fourths of its electricity from nuclear reactors, has upgraded the level of the Fukushima crisis on the disaster

scale.

What caused the Fukushima crisis? The earthquake shut down the three operating reactors, as designed, thereby cutting off the power with which to cool the reactors' still-hot cores. As designed, the back-up diesel generators also cut in, but an hour later, cut out, for as-yet-unknown reasons. The core, containing hundreds of tonnes of fuel, started heating up further. As water circulation stopped, more than half the core was exposed in Reactors 3 and 1, and the entire core in Reactor 2. All three reactors suffered a LOCA, with a potential for a partial or complete core meltdown. Soon, unspecified quantities of radiation were released.

As India embarks on a nuclear expansion programme, it needs to learn four lessons from the crisis. First, nuclear power generation is the

only form of energy production that can lead to a catastrophic accident -- but only because reactors are inherently vulnerable.

Reactors are high-pressure high-temperature systems in which a high-energy fission chain-reaction is only just controlled. Nuclear reactors are both systemically complex, and internally tightly coupled. A fault in one sub-system is quickly transmitted to others and gets magnified, plunging the whole system into crisis.

Second, nuclear power involves radiation exposure at all stages, from uranium mining and fuel fabrication, to reactor operation and maintenance, to routine emissions, and spent-fuel handling, storage and reprocessing. Nuclear reactors leave a toxic trail of high-level radioactive wastes. These remain hazardous for thousands of years. The half-life of

plutonium-239, which is produced by fission, is 24,400 years. Science knows no way of safely storing nuclear wastes for long periods, let alone neutralising them or disposing of them.

Third, India has no independent authority that can evolve safety standards and regulate reactors for safety. The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board is dependent for its budget, equipment and personnel on the DAE and reports to the chairman of the AEC, who is also the DAE's Secretary. Over all the four decades since the Tarapur reactors were installed, the DAE has merely implemented or copied US and Canadian designs, with minimal modifications.

Finally, after the Japan crisis, nuclear safety must take precedence over all else. It would be downright unethical to sacrifice safety to please an industry that has failed the world and to pamper a domestic technocratic elite that considers itself infallible, omniscient and above the public interest.

The DAE must discard their "it-can't-happen-here" hubris, and introspect into India's nuclear safety record. There have been embarrassing failures, like a 1993 fire at the Narora reactor, the Kaiga containment dome collapse, frequent cases of radiation over-exposure at numerous sites, unsafe heavy-water transportation, and terrible health effects near the Jaduguda uranium mines and the Rajasthan reactors.

What's urgently needed is an independent, credible safety audit of India's nuclear programme, pending a radical review of India's half-baked nuclear power expansion plans. People outside the DAE must participate in the audit. There must also be an immediate moratorium on reactor construction, including the controversial Areva EPR, which is planning to install at Jaitapur in Maharashtra.

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## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

March 22

- 1739**  
Nadir Shah occupies Delhi in India and sacks the city, stealing the jewels of the Peacock Throne.
- 1916**  
The last Emperor of China, Yuan Shikai, abdicates the throne and the Republic of China is restored.
- 1943**  
World War II: the entire population of Khatyn in Belarus is burnt alive by German occupation forces.
- 1945**  
The Arab League is founded when a charter is adopted in Cairo, Egypt.
- 2004**  
Ahmed Yassin, co-founder and leader of the Palestinian Sunni Islamist group Hamas, two bodyguards, and nine civilian bystanders are killed in the Gaza Strip when hit by Israeli Air Force AH-64 Apache fired Hellfire missiles.