

A raw deal from a friendly neighbour

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THAT Foreign Minister Dipu Moni would return home empty handed from Delhi was a foregone conclusion, given the mindset of the Indian leaders and its internal political dynamics. And with the general election in India round the corner, the thought of any immediate shift of its stance is a delusion. The failed overtures to India to clinch deals in favour of Bangladesh have almost certainly caught the government on the wrong foot and may cast a shadow over its prospects in the forthcoming election.

The enthusiasm of our leaders over assumed resolution of long festering border and the Teesta water sharing disputes with India has now dissipated into dismay and disenchantment. Yet, it was not entirely unexpected. The great expectation about the result of talks brokered by the two advisers and confirmed by two prime ministers was a wild goose chase and a cry in wilderness. The implementation floundered on the rock of known Indian track record of breach of promise.

Yet, Bangladesh does not deserve such a raw deal. This sentiment is echoed by no lesser persons than four distinguished former Indian High Commissioners posted in Dhaka. Dev Mukherjee, Ranjeet Mitter, Bina Shikri and

Muchken Dubey have said recently in an interview with the Delhi correspondent of the *Protham Alo* that Bangladesh during last four and half years have addressed many Indian concerns including security, and India should have reciprocated the gesture by living up to its promise on Teesta water sharing and land boundary agreements. They reiterated the responsibility of India to improve relations with Bangladesh.

This government, in good faith, has conceded to every Indian concern, every agenda, one after another, without getting anything in return. It has fully cooperated with India on 'transfer of sentenced persons, zero tolerance for insurgent activities from Bangladesh soil and combating international terrorism'. It has agreed to allow Kolkata-Dhaka bus service, Dhaka-Agartala bus service; and a direct Kolkata-Agartala bus service is now being developed. Construction of railway link between Agartala and Akhaura is underway. The *Maitry* train service between Dhaka and Kolkata is already under operation.

In 2010, during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to Delhi, a framework agreement was signed allowing river port transit

facility to the seven northeastern states of India from Ashuganj to Akhaura. Once implemented fully the agreement would allow India to transport annually an estimated 10 million tons of inward and outward goods to the eastern region, surpassing the previous level of river transport of about 50,000 tons of goods. It is almost a token cost.

US dollar one billion line of Indian credit is a clever business promotion to finance the purchase of Indian buses, trains and other infra structure services. Bangladesh can do very little as it is left with no bargaining chip.

Besides the use of Chittagong and Mongla ports, new ports of call including Ashuganj and Narayanganj have been added to the Indian shopping list. One of its companies floated, much to our horror, tenders for expansion of river port facilities in Narayanganj without the knowledge of the Bangladesh Government.

It was an extraordinary gesture of goodwill when the Bangladesh government allowed land transport of heavy and large oversized power plant machinery from Ashuganj to Agartala by erecting concrete slabs over Titas

River. Titas, in fetters, a victim of ruthless assault, was in tears. These are all measures of so called connectivity to provide transit to the landlocked North East India by reducing huge distance, time and cost.

But India has been slow-footed and inert to meet the legitimate and existential concerns of Bangladesh. India backtracked on its assurance of equitable share of the Ganges water when Bangladesh suffered progressive diminution of water supply of the Ganges over the years.

The construction of Gozoldoba barrage and several dams on the Teesta, the uncertainty of the future of Feni, Manu, Muhuri, Khoai, Gumti, Dharla and Dudkumr rivers, the proposed linking of Himalayan rivers, Ganges and Brahmaputra, the proposed Tipaimukh hydro-electric plant on the Barak in Manipur and the coal fired power plant now being set up in the Sunderbans area by India, primarily for its benefit, are all swords of Damocles hanging on Bangladesh's head in the form of a looming spectre of environmental and ecological disaster.

Bangladesh has ratified the 1974 Indira-Mujib land boundary accord on exchange of

enclaves and adversely possessed land by transferring Berubari but India dithered and prevaricated till 2011 in implementing the accord.

While the Berlin wall has been dismantled, India has constructed barbed wire fence along its border with Bangladesh. There have been at least 1000 deaths of Bangladeshis by BSF firing during the last one decade for alleged infiltration attempts. The incident of brutal torture of alleged smugglers and merciless killing of Felani is an ugly scar. Raising and iron curtain and seeking transit facility seems incongruous.

India treats Bangladesh as a protected market of its goods and services. There is yawning multi billion dollar trade deficit. While Indian exports stood at \$4.743 billion, Bangladesh export stood at only \$498 million during 2011-12. The waiver of duty of 46 exportable items is a fig leaf to cover inadequacies. US dollar one billion line of Indian credit is a clever business promotion to finance the purchase of Indian buses, trains and other infra structure services.

Bangladesh can do very little as it is left with no bargaining chip. It was our folly to give away everything.

The writer is a former diplomat.

Partition and the post-colonial state

AZIZUL RASEL

HAVING failed to resolve the political crisis the politicians of the Indian sub-continent took the decision to divide the country in communal lines and the country was divided into two states: Pakistan and India on 14-15 August, 1947.

The Partition of India was one of the most calamitous events in the history of South Asia which changed the thousand years' political geography of the region, caused series of communal riots in the new states and made millions of people homeless. The partition of India happened with amazingly rapidity -- only within seven years -- after first formal demand for separate state(s) for the Muslims in India was made. Partition not only divided the Indian subcontinent into two countries but the hastily drawn line also created many complexities, problems and sowed the seeds of future ethnic clashes, oppressions and further disintegration. Even today one can observe the harmful impact of partition on the region. In this article I examine the impact of partition on the Bengal delta, particularly the eastern part of the delta which is now independent Bangladesh.

The partition had much greater impact on the areas covered by the Bengal delta than other parts of the subcontinent. Throughout its history, the area was united for most of the time and was seen as one political unit, except a short span of time between 1905 and 1911, when Bengal was divided by the British for administrative, political and other reasons. In August 1947, when India was divided into two states, the delta was also divided into two parts: western part of Bengal joined the new state of India and the other part, eastern Bengal was added to Pakistan, a completely different region from Bengal in terms of geography and culture.

Drawing a border between the two parts of Bengal was very drastic. Even a few days after Partition, the inhabitants of both parts of the delta were confused as to which area had gone to which part. The border drawn by the committee was a random line, which in some cases split a district into two. However, borders in these areas were fluid since historical time. But the new border caused neighbours, relatives and friends, who were living side by side for many generations, to be separated and to migrate to different parts of the two Bengals - now a part of different States. This especially happened to the people who found themselves on the newly drawn border. The new border also created a very strange type of 'island' which is known as chitmahal or enclaves. People of Bangladesh are made aware of the misery of the enclaves' people through occasional newspaper reports.

One of the worst impacts of Partition was the spread of large scale communalism in the society. Communalism began to spread immediately before the partition. The notorious communal riots of Noakhali and Calcutta immediately before the partition are well-known. After the partition of India, the new post-colonial states could not eradicate communalism from the society. Or, one can say the Pakistan state was hesitant about the question of communalism.

After the partition of Bengal, communalism was wide-spread in East Bengal too. Almost every year, hundreds of cases of communal harassment were lodged by the victims, including

The Muslim who migrated from India to East Bengal in the wake of the partition experienced a cultural shock. After the partition many Muslims from different parts of India migrated to eastern Bengal and they had a completely different culture from the Bengali Muslims. Rafi Uddin Ahmed, Richard M. Eaton and Willem van Schendel have shown in their works that the culture and rituals of Bengali Muslims, especially Muslims of eastern Bengal, are different from that of the other parts of India and Bengal. Although majority of the people of eastern Bengal were Muslims their Islamic practices and rituals were not purely Islamic. Many local elements had entered into the religious practices of the Muslims here. These overlapping religious practices distinguish the Muslims of eastern Bengal from the Muslims of North India, Pakistan or elsewhere in the world. Therefore, there was, understandably, a cultural conflict between the Bengali society and the Muslims who settled here from other parts of India. Many of these Muslim migrants from India migrated to eastern part of Bengal with 'a separate Muslim state ideology,' that is, their belief in the Pakistani state. Later we would see that when the Bengali Muslims (and Hindu) nationalist fought for an independent state these people would oppose the cause and take the Pakistani side.

Beside these socio-cultural impacts, the partition had a far-reaching impact on the economy and ecology of eastern Bengal which is now Bangladesh. Because of the way the border was drawn, eastern Bengal lost many of its economically important regions. For instance, although it got greater part of the Sylhet district, it lost those parts of Sylhet which were rich in tea plantation. Asfaq Hossain shows in his research that eastern Bengal lost 55 valuable tea gardens because of the new border arrangement. It also lost some regions strategically important to the economy and ecology of the land. For example, going by the makeup of the population, Murshidabad and Malda should have come to eastern Bengal. But these two districts went to West Bengal instead. Murshidabad was important to keep control on the water sources. Later, it would have a serious consequence for the environment and economy of Bangladesh. Bangladesh has 55 international rivers entering from India which are controlled by India. This controlling of water resources has created a perpetual threat for the ecology and economy of Bangladesh.

Thus, the partition and the way the border was drawn have created a number of perennial insecurities for the postcolonial states of the subcontinent.

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SANWAR AZAM SUNNY

FACEBOOK, Twitter, Youtube and Google Plus! With the advent of social media, cloud computing and a growing technologically savvy population, in both urban and suburban spheres of cities, high speed internet connectivity can consolidate various needs and demands, both of the city and its people. Systems can be designed through smart phone applications, wireless gadgets and the internet to collect and analyse updated data that enhances the usability and efficiency of the available infrastructure. The high-speed fiber is advantageous as system efficiency and business completion of a city greatly hinges on the proper utilisation of city-wide broadband and Wi-Fi connections in an era of openness among novel social media outlets. The big-data based changes taking place across the world is dauntingly huge. Experimental innovation or risk taking may be institutionally blocked in such settings for various firms or industries as technologically-driven public sector or capital projects may fail if management does not adequately consider and address risks.

In the short term, online portals on websites, text messages and smart phone applications can be popularised within the high-tech national infrastructure; and in the long term, kiosks could be constructed through the outward growing circles of the city for easy access to municipal services. Digital content and collaboration technologies can be popularised in a cost-effective effort to provide quality services and experiences in education and healthcare through storage systems for student or patient records and easier content sharing. Also in the long run, city utilities can depend on digital grids to optimise resource consumption in buildings and cutting wastes and losses by incentives to curb consumer behavior towards cleaner technologies. Similarly, traffic and transportation issues can be better managed through smart pricing by tolling higher for congested roads in rush hour to alleviate congestion and pollution while raising funds for other programs.

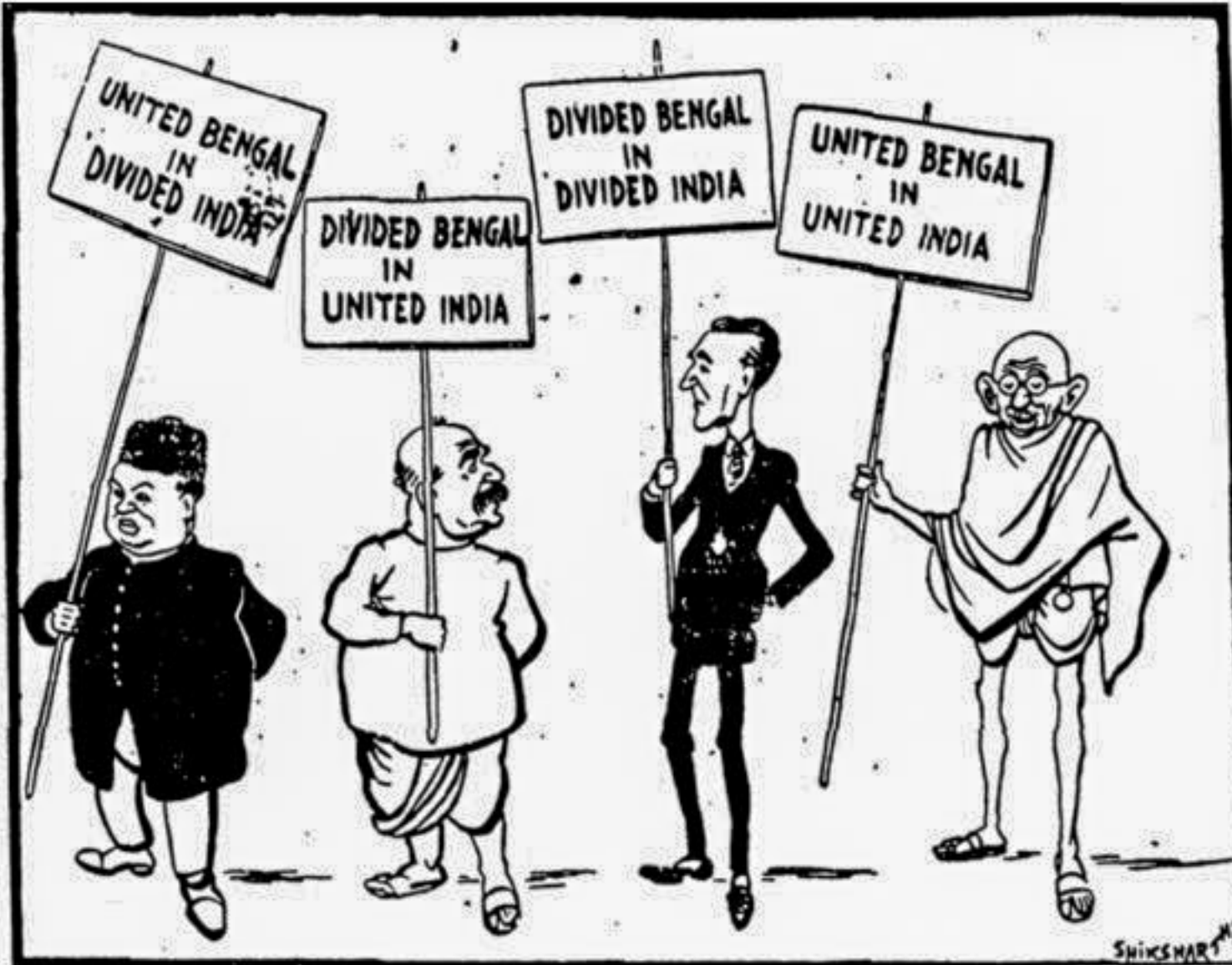
A central database for employees can also be created in which they can remotely connect to, with an e-document management system, e-calendars, hours logged and progress, video-conferencing, tele-working and the ability to contribute to journal or log entries on 'how-to's and the 'know-how's' for other personnel involved in similar projects or tasks. Putting more processes online can automate workflow, standardise procedures, reduce process times and complexity, ultimately leading to higher efficiency while incurring lower costs. The database will provide common access to information throughout all the departments leading to better bureaucratic connectivity by facilitating easier data exchange through a single standard.

It will also not be enough to just switch from paper to electronic formats. More access to handheld devices besides regular desktop computers could also be provided. To reduce the number of approvals required, processes inside bureaucracies need to be streamlined and external actors need to be identified who can take part in this process. Given the involvement of the various departments, as well as other jurisdictions, the processes, logistics and procurement can be planned to lead to better transparency. To coordinate the task across these departments, a committee can be established to develop the system and ensure proper implementation of different project planning stages in hopes of best managing system changes by supporting local technological entrepreneurship and economic growth.

If budgetary constraints exist due to limited funds, individual citizens and businesses could themselves design applications and databases on the city's behalf, leading to cheaper and faster sources of innovation.

Both long term and short term goals would need to be identified as the politically charged short term delivery of results can take precedence over long term strategy. The initiative also needs to be considerably marketed with rhetoric when the city, if not the country, evaluates and makes a public promise to the citizens and stakeholders. Data and informational use derived from these technologies have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses and public officials. The public sector therefore needs to provide or help the private sector to complement provisions of this innovative municipal infrastructure. This way, businesses will be enabled to function effectively while the city authorities can offer appropriate and efficient public services.

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complaints of rape, arson and extortion. For example, it is seen from the confidential political report of the government of East Bengal that in 1950 more than 500 cases of serious communal harassments were reported only in the Barisal district. But the attitude of state towards these communal harassments may interest us. In most cases the investigation of the state agencies termed the harassments as baseless and a, Indian conspiracy against Pakistan.

The inert action of the government also patronised these acts indirectly. In fact the postcolonial Pakistan state was haunted by the ghost of 'Indian conspiracy' and saw the people of Hindu community as the agent of India. The insecurity and the social alienation in Pakistan forced many Hindus to leave East Bengal. Those who stayed back lived an insecure life. It is also true that some Indian newspapers played a role in intensifying the communal disharmony in East Bengal.

ACROSS

1 Vagrant

4 Poke

7 Femur

8 Elaine's last name on "Seinfeld"

10 Cook by direct heat

11 Silvery

13 Smooth-coated pooch

16 1/20 ton (Abbr.)

17 Hum-dinger

18 Moving truck

19 Narnia's Aslan, e.g.

20 Antitoxins

21 Munchie

23 Enthusiasts' emotions

25 Roe provider

26 Group of quail

27 Debtor's letters

28 Muslim maiden

30 Thee

33 High-backed chairs

36 Earthling, in sci-fi

37 Flavor

38 Go over the books

39 Spud's buds

40 Always, in verse

41 Two, in Tijuana

DOWN

1 Give a leg up

2 One

3 Tuneful

4 Spanish wine

5 Mad town

6 Tavern offering

7 Fore-head

8 Conductor's wand

9 Whine

10 English channel?

12 Signs of sorrow

14 Kindle

29 Where the elated walk

30 Affirmatives

31 Uneaten morsels

32 Work with

34 Verifiable

35 Boxer's successful blow

SOLUTION time: 21 mins.

THOU CBS AMOK HANG HOE SAGE ORGA ANCESTRY REINTEGRITY SITTIES DOM BAG NOWAY COUNTRY ABA FOX AYE BIGOTRY YEMEN COO DON DEBUG POULTRY TIGER WOLF CAL LIEER OWN EPEE

Yesterday's answer 6-26

CRYPTOQUIP

C B R C Y A S Y X D O G P B R S O C S Y Z X H P L V C J Z P V X U L I X V X H R S Y B O D G P V U H Z G L S L V I L X A Y G D Y S O H S J R T O B S Y

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: UNCOMMON GARDEN TOOL THATS MOST USEFUL IF DRAGGED IN THE DIRECTION OF SUNSET: WESTWARD HOE.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: L equals B

BEETLE BAILY

WHY DO YOU WANT TO CHANGE THE PARADE SCHEDULE?

I CAN'T GO INTO DETAIL, SIR

HE CAN'T GO INTO DETAIL!

1-4

HENRY

USED BOOKS DEPT.

1-4

by Mort Walker

NO DETAILS!

FINALLY!

1-4

by Don Trachte

QUOTABLE Quotes

"Throughout life people will make you mad, disrespect you and treat you bad. Let God deal with the things they do, cause hate in your heart will consume you too."

Will Smith