

National interest: Dear Narendrabhai

SHEKHAR GUPTA

WHY you need to get your party to pass the Bangladesh land pact and secure for India its future on the east. Why am I not addressing this appeal to Adaniya Advaniji or my old friend Sushma first? Or to dear Rajnathi or Arun (Jaitley), even though I might have known all four of them more closely than you, mostly because we all live in New Delhi? It is because in their current mood, the first two are unlikely to give anybody a hearing on any thought that is remotely conciliatory. And the last two have tried, are trying, but sometimes seem like giving up. Which is scary from the point of view of India's supreme national interest. That is why this is a situation where you, Narendra bhai, need to weigh in.

Because opportunities and moments like this arrive only once in decades in a nation's history. And if we lose them, particularly if we do so because our politics is broken at the inter-party level or, in this specific case, most regrettably, at the intra-party level, our future generations will never forgive us. That is why this moment needs your intervention, because the matter rests within your party, and is caught within its messy, but utterly transparent, internal power tussle. Your party has messed up much virtuous reformist legislation already, it has failed to live up to your own ideas and expectations on the food bill - in fact, Murl Manohar Joshi's speech on this in the Lok Sabha sounded like his staff had stolen a pamphlet from the NAC, or Arundhati Roy had written it. And if it now loses India this great opportunity, despite total political and strategic agreement, you will end up looking a lesser leader with your party and, more importantly, given the stage on which you want to play now, nationally.

That long, somewhat rhetorical preamble was necessary because the issue - and the country it refers to - is somehow a red rag to your party and the RSS. It is Bangladesh. The BJP and RSS have eternally seen Bangladesh as the Pakistan on our eastern borders, its demographic "invasion" through illegal migration fully matching the threat of armed jihadis from Pakistan. I am not arguing with you on that point of view yet, although I would some day soon. But here is an opportunity to change the story, the script and the history with Bangladesh. Not one senior leader of your party has, as yet, made one argument against the land boundary agreement that India and Bangladesh have signed and which now awaits a constitutional amendment to be passed in Parliament. On several occasions, your party president Rajnath Singh has very sagaciously stated that his party supports the agreement. Yet it hasn't been able to vote for it because of last-minute objections. The opposition of the BJP's Assam unit, etc are just convenient excuses. Basically, the issue is caught in the internal strife within your own party.

We need to understand two key issues here. One, what does this agreement entail. And two, why does it represent a strategic opportunity of the kind not seen in our neighbourhood since the Simla Agreement (which is an opportunity, you will agree, Indira Gandhi lost in not having the LoC formally sanctified as our border). We are paying for that blunder on our western flanks now. Should we make a similar one on the east now? And should India lose out just because Hastinapur maharathis of your party can't be seen to be thinking or working together? And if you fail to weigh in now, what kind of leader are you?

Firstly, what is this agreement. India and Bangladesh (East Pakistan then) inherited a complex border from Sir Cyril Radcliff, who gave each side enclaves deep inside the other's territory. These involve not much territory, and involve about 51,000 people. Because of our cursed bilateral relationship, either side does not give access to the other easily to its enclaves. As a result, these territories have become stateless sovereign republics where people do not have any real citizenship and no government keeps control. These are dens of thugs, smugglers, terrorists, gun-runners and illegal immigration mafias. Even jihadi groups and the ISI have routinely used these as staging posts and as permanent gaps in our border surveillance.

It was only now, with the rise of a friendly, liberal and courageous Sheikh Hasina government in Bangladesh that the two countries have been able to sign this historic agreement to exchange these enclaves and rationalise our border. Alongside, we have also signed an agreement for joint border management. But that is not possible until the enclaves are sorted out. There is no loss of territory for India. Even notionally, Bangladesh ends up losing 500 hectares on a net basis.

The government has held 17 meetings with the opposition leaders to brief them on the agreement and barring staunch opposition from the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), and a qualified one from Mamata, the entire Parliament is behind this agreement. That includes the BJP, as confirmed by your party president in many public statements. But so broken is your party's relationship with the Congress (blame for which is shared equally) and so intense is the internal competition in your top brass to impress a mythical RSS constituency, or to block anything constructive, that the opportunity is being lost.

To further underline that point, it was only after a wide consensus had been obtained on this agreement that our president, Pranab Mukherjee, in March this year, made a public commitment in his speech at the Dhaka University that the agreement will be presented for ratification in India's Parliament. To not do so now will be a disgrace for India. It will also be the loss of a strategic opportunity that may not wait, or in fact may never come for a generation. And why do we say so? Because in December or latest by early January, Bangladesh also goes for general elections. Sheikh Hasina has been incredibly brave in turning around her India policy. And our inability to deliver on two solemn agreements, Teesta waters (blocked by Mamata) and now the land boundary pact, are already becoming killer embarrassments for her, that she went down on her knees to India and got her proud country humiliated and so on. If she loses, and Khaleda, backed by Islamist forces,

returns, India will be the biggest loser. In any case, this agreement will be taken off the table by her even before the next Indian government, if it is your party's, gets to even read it. So you have no time to lose.

Now the second point. Why is this agreement such a once-in-a-generation strategic opportunity? Because the changing of the nature of Bangladesh's politics, society and public discourse is as important to India as changing that of Pakistan's. And Sheikh Hasina has been doing just that. From a situation when it used to be a sanctuary for our rebels, particularly the ULFA, and a playground for the ISI and jihadi forces, Bangladesh is now an ally. Remember how it has handed over our fugitives, particularly Arabinda Rajkhowa, and is holding Anup Chetia and the political risks it entails. If Tripura can convert some of its underground gas into power, it is only because Bangladesh has let you transport those giant generators by barge through its rivers. They would have never reached there through our narrow, winding mountain roads. It has forced the ISI to shut shop. It has also disbanded the Bangladesh Rifles, which had become such a malevolent presence on our borders - remember that ghastly visual of the bodies of our BSF patrolmen killed by the BDR being carried,

hanging by their limbs tied to sticks? The courts, under her, have given judgments holding both the martial law impositions (by Generals Ziaur Rahman and Ershad) unconstitutional, and thereby all laws enacted by them, which effectively converted Bangladesh into an Islamic Republic, have been abrogated. Bangladesh is therefore restored to its original, secular constitution. One can always have a super-liberal argument against the government banning the Jamaat-e-Islami, on its handing out death sentences to old radicals and Jamaatis for collaborating in the Pakistani army's atrocities in 1971. But, certainly, that cannot be your party's argument or yours.

And you want to know how fragile these gains are? The first radical to be convicted and given the death sentence, Abul Kalam Azad, the red-bearded ideologue better known as Bachchu Razakar or Lal Daadhi, has already escaped, and where else but to Pakistan, now harboured by the jihadis there. Scores of others, under trial now, are waiting for the defeat of Hasina's Awami League this winter and the rise, on the streets, of a group called Hefazat-e-Islam which grew, like much Bangladeshi radicalism, from Chittagong and whose 13-point charter is borrowed straight from the Taliban. I may or may not agree with you Narendrabhai, but I know you think you are being swept to power next summer. What kind of a Bangladesh would you rather be dealing with on your eastern borders? You have an opportunity to determine that now. And even your critics and adversaries, even the minorities that fear you, will bless you for this foresight, hailing it as a great act of liberalism and a signal of your arrival as a truly national leader, and a patriot.

The writer is the Editor-in-Chief, *The Indian Express*. This article was first published in *The Indian Express*.



SHIFTING IMAGES

THE first signs of autumn always make me pensive. The varying colours of the landscape and the subtle changes in the air generate a feeling of sweet lethargy and nostalgia. One of the big challenges of autumn is making the house "winter friendly." Each year I go through the ritual of putting away the many summer items which we will not use for the next few months. On the other hand the quilts, coats and warm clothing need to be unpacked in preparation for the winter.

Last week, while emptying out the closets, I stumbled upon an old family album, with frayed corners and faded cover. Given the "modern" trend of sharing photos online, albums have now become virtually obsolete. However, out of sheer curiosity I opened the album, which was one of the few things that I had preserved from my parents' home. The sepia coloured, familiar faces stared back at me in silent disapproval. It seemed they were reprimanding me for the callous negligence of an object that was once a household treasure, proudly displayed to many a visitor!

I remembered my father's passion for photography: he never missed an opportunity to capture the memories of our vacations with the help of his Nikon camera. They were happy times spent together, not at exotic destinations like the Champs Elysee or the Venetian canals, but in the inner recesses of the Sunderbans and on the pristine shores of Cox's Bazaar. At one point our spare bedroom was converted into a darkroom for developing photos. It held such a mysterious aura that my sister Sonia and I would sometimes tiptoe into it imagining that we had entered the dark world of ogres and monsters!

As I examined the photographs, my memory traveled through the tunnel of time and my eyes welled up with tears. Instantly I connected not just to the people in the photos but to the familiar objects visible in the blurry background. I recognised the

Persian miniature painting acquired by my father on his official trip to Tehran in the '60s. It was a gift to my mother who was an art lover. The ceramic vase on the brass table peeping through a group picture was my mother's favourite. I remember how she carefully dusted it each morning. These were not just artifacts, they represented memories built around their acquisition and preservation.

The pictures opened up a floodgate of emotions and I realised, with regret, that I had given away most of the stuff that my parents had lovingly accumulated in their life because there was no space for them in my life. Like many of my generation I believe that a home must have the right theme and décor with every room structured and organised. Whatever didn't fit the "plan" had to be disposed off!

Leaving through the pages of the album I found a memorable family photo. We were happy and relaxed, sitting on an old-fashioned sofa in what we called our "multipurpose room." The room, with a shelf full of books, magazines and albums, easy cane chairs, a TV in the corner, even an ironing table, would today be considered as "cluttered." In terms of décor it was the least attractive room in the house. But this was where we spent many joyful afternoons and evenings. My father would occasionally pick up a book from the shelf and read out a passage to lure us into reading it. Sometimes my mother would open an album and point to a photograph to recount the happy times we had spent together.

As I look around my home in Virginia, I notice that I have taken meticulous care to make sure that everything is well coordinated and organised. We, too, have memories attached to the many objects we have acquired. But there is nothing here to spread the warmth of my parents' loving care or the wisdom of their intellectual insights. Why didn't I preserve my mother's favourite vase or my father's personal copy of Robert Frost's poems with his handwritten notes?

Thinking of the future, I was suddenly overcome with a strange feeling of sadness. Someday, our children, too, would be sorting out and jettisoning the things that we have collected over time. Perhaps this is the cycle of life, and that is how it's meant to be. Tastes change and material objects gradually lose their relevance. But I hope our kids will be wiser and retain a few things that will help them establish a loving connection with their parents when we are gone! For things are only things -- but they can become much more when they tell a story of love.

The writer is a renowned Rabindra Sangeet exponent and a former employee of the World Bank. E-mail: shiftingimages@gmail.com

ACROSS

- 1 Venomous viper
- 4 Autumn mo.
- 7 Edibles
- 11 Abound
- 13 Boxing legend
- 14 Operatic solo
- 15 Sandwich cookie
- 16 The R in AARP
- 17 Pinocle tactic
- 18 Bamboo eater
- 20 Honshu volcano
- 22 Right angle
- 24 Contact lens cleaner, e.g.
- 28 Wrinkly dog
- 32 Actress
- 33 Winona
- 34 Suburb, maybe
- 36 Office-holders
- 37 Winged

DOWN

- 1 On
- 2 Antitoxins
- 3 Hammer-head part
- 4 Rowing need
- 5 Staff leader?
- 6 "— Andronicus"
- 7 1966-71 sitcom
- 8 Raw mineral
- 9 Lubricate
- 10 Papa
- 12 Sitcom since 2009
- 19 Matter-horn, e.g.

21 Pickle container

23 Hawaiian garland

25 Not working

26 Approach

27 Blunders

28 Impale

29 Sacred

30 MPs' quarry

31 Neither Rep. nor Dem.

35 Seek damages

38 Pair

40 Take to the skies

42 Dispatched

45 Overseas coin

47 Stop up

48 Stash

49 Exam

50 Spanish 38-Down

51 Before

52 Upper limit, for short

54 Small barrel

Solution time: 24 mins.

Last answer

F	A	R	S	T	B	L	A	N	S											
C	L	U	E	T	I	N	E	O	L	I	A	N								
H	O	R	B	L	E	G	O	B	B	L	E									
E	R	A	O	R	I	O	N	B	O	W										
F	E	D	S	T	A	N	B	E	M	E										
S	T	E	A	M	C	I	T	A	D	E	L									
R	A	J	A	N	T															
S	C	I	A	T	I	O	T	E	N	S	E									
H	A	S	M	T	H	O	S	E	T	S										
O	N	O	E	N	A	C	T	W	I	T										
W	O	B	B	L	E	C	O	B	B	L	E									
Y	E	A	R	L	Y	U	G	L	I	E	R									
D	R	O	S	S	R	A	T	E	S											

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11			12		13			14	
15				16				17	
18			19		20		21		
			22		23		24		25 26 27
28 29 30				31		32			
33				34		35		36	
37				38		39		40	
41				42		43			
				44				45 46 47 48 49	
50 51 52				53		54		55	
56						57		58	
59						60			61

CRYPTOQUIP

Q T S W U Z N X K J I C H Q C L I J V

J P Q J J V G L F Q U U V Z Q Y I K Z I Q U K

N W J N S Q Z W K I Z I X J K P N T

T N C Y I C K : Q F Q C X L I - H N C I .

Last Cryptoquip: I MIGHT RELEASE OUR CLASSROOM GLOBE DOWN THIS HILL BECAUSE REALLY WANT TO ROLL THE WORLD.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: S equals F

BEETLE BAILY by Mort Walker

TODAY I'D LIKE TO EXAMINE THE FALSE COMPLAINTS THE MEN HAVE ON MY FAIR TREATMENT AND HOW TO USE THEIR TIME WISELY

MAYBE WE CAN DO IT AT ANOTHER SESSION

I HAVE A MEETING IN TWO HOURS

1-21 ©2012 by King Features Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved.

CARRER OPPORTUNITY
NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY
The first private university in Bangladesh

Assistant Security Officer: 04 positions (3 Male and 1 Female)

North South University (NSU) is seeking experienced, technically proficient, creative and highly motivated Assistant Security Officer.

Qualifications and Experiences: Master's degree in any discipline (Arts, Science and Commerce) with computer literacy. At least 5 (five) years work experience in similar position in any large/multinational organization. The person having experiences in operating and monitoring IP based CC TV, baggage and vehicle scanner, metal detector, explosive detector and modern electronic access and security control devices should apply for this position. Well conversant in MS Word, MS Excel and other computer applications with good typing speed in Bengali and English. **Retired Defense Services officers or with equivalent background with good health and excellent service track record will be given preference.** Age limit: Not exceeding 40 years.

Lab Coordinator (1 position) & Laboratory Officer (4 positions)

North South University invites application from highly qualified and widely experienced Lab Coordinator and Laboratory Officer in the Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology.

Qualifications and Experiences (Lab Coordinator): M. Phil/ M.Sc. in Biochemistry/Microbiology/Biotechnology/Molecular Biology/Genetic Engineering having minimum 5 years laboratory experience in academic/diagnostics/research institutes. Should be conversant with laboratory techniques/ laboratory management and computer applications. Research experience with publications in any of the above field will be preferred. Age limit: Not exceeding 40 years.

Qualifications and Experiences (Laboratory Officer): M. Sc. in Biochemistry/Microbiology/Biotechnology/Molecular Biology/Genetic Engineering having minimum 1 year laboratory experience in academic/diagnostics /research institutes. Should be conversant with laboratory techniques and computer applications. Work experience in Biochemical, Microbiological, Immunological and Molecular Biology techniques will be given priority. Age limit: Not exceeding 35 years.

Monthly Salary (for all positions):
 Attractive salary package & benefits will be offered to the deserving candidates.

Other Benefits:
 Provident Fund, Gratuity, Festival Bonuses, Group Insurance, in- house free Medical Consultation etc.

Only short-listed candidates will be called for interview

Candidates may apply with complete CV, two photographs, copies of certificates and other credentials by 22 September, 2013:

The Director (Administration)
 NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY
 Bashundhara, Baridhara, Dhaka – 1229
 Tel. 8852000 Ext. 1201/1212
 or by e-mail to: nsuhr@northsouth.edu

Master's in Media & Communication

Admission Autumn 2013

Specialized Areas

1. Journalism
2. Film & Television

Specialized Courses

- Globalization and Contemporary Media and Communication
- Media Research and Cultural Analysis
- Digital Media and Everyday Culture
- Advanced Reporting and Editing
- Digital Photojournalism
- Television Drama Production
- Print and Broadcast Journalism
- Television and Video Documentary

Special Features

- ♦ Duration: 16 months / 24 months
- ♦ Classes: Evening, small size and individual attention
- ♦ Teaching by Seminars
- ♦ Thesis writing
- ♦ Scholarship/Assistantships available

Eligibility:

- A four-year Bachelor's degree from a reputed university with a CGPA of at least 2.5 or
- A three-year Bachelor's degree (with Honours) from a reputed university
- Work experience in a media institution will be considered as additional qualification.

Application deadline: Monday, 9 September 2013
 Interview: Tuesday, 10 September 2013
 Registration: 11-12 September 2013
 Classes Start: Saturday, 14 September 2013

INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH

Department of Media & Communication, Room no-7001 [lift button # 6] 7 & 8th floor, Plot 16, Block B, Bashundhara R/A, Dhaka-1229, Bangladesh. Cell No: 01782 673230, Phone: 880-2-840 1645-52, 8402065-76 Ext: 348 or 240, web: www.iub.edu.bd, e-mail: shamin_zaman@iub.edu.bd, silversunny2013@gmail.com

Albert Einstein

QUOTABLE Quotes

“Any intelligent fool can make things bigger, more complex, and more violent. It takes a touch of genius -- and a lot of courage -- to move in the opposite direction.”