

Playing ping-pong with rule of law!

PLEASURE IS ALL MINE



SHAH HUSAIN IMAM

We are second to none in losing focus on a tale-tell crime and bringing up 'broader issues' or going to the 'root causes.' Thus we exhaust our intellectual and creative reserves on deflections off-course rather than advancing with a focus to solve an issue within its own confines.

WE are puzzled but not surprised at the prime minister's criticism of some 'overenthusiastic' people filing writ petitions in the seven murder case. These, in her words, are hampering the executive's functioning.

The PM was quoted as saying, "We know when and what steps should be taken. But what would the executive branch do if the judiciary performs the duties that are basically under the jurisdiction of the executive?"

Conflict of jurisdiction among the three organs of the state -- executive, judiciary and legislative -- is as undesirable as it is unexpected because the Constitution, as the supreme law of the land, has defined their roles ideally within a framework of checks and balances. If powers are concentrated in one hand they become susceptible to abuse which is an anathema to the concept of a People's Republic.

Coming to writ jurisdiction of high judiciary, it is invoked as an entitlement to constitutional remedy to any impingement of fundamental right enshrined in the Constitution. Now the right to live is the most sacrosanct of fundamental rights. And, where it appears to be threatened it may cause a writ petition to be filed by an

aggrieved person and accepted by the higher judiciary to give a ruling on.

The High Court last Sunday directed the government to arrest the three retired Rab officials for their alleged involvement in the Narayanganj seven murder case. That the ex-Rab officials have not yet been arrested is being explained away by the home ministry in terms of the HC not having specified any time limit for their arrest. Therefore, it does not constitute any disrespect for HC nor is the government in breach of contempt of court, it has been argued. But there is an unmistakable urgency implied in such a direction of the court, if only for the sake of upholding public interest including retaining the efficacy of forensic evidence which has a way of withering with the passage of time.

Well, after torrential words and rhetoric hype in the media spewed out by some ministers, the serial murder case is pushed on to a procrastination trajectory, perhaps the same old story retold about major murder incidents over the years. For, the special committee formed to probe the serial murder has filed an ad-interim report requiring a full month to make its final submissions. Meanwhile, arrest of those implicated and even have had a prima facie case arrayed against (which is why they were laid off in the first place), or the overall status on the seven murder case get shrouded in ever newer layers of mystery. Or is it a can of worms vested quarters are desperate to stop from tumbling down the road?

The prime minister, however, paused meaningfully to say: "Where would he (the

guilty) go, no matter if he is a relative of any powerful element (he could not escape)?"

She warned Awami Leaguers against the likes of Nur Hussain who switched from Jatiya Party to BNP and then to AL. This realisation of how an element despite having a plethora of cases against him had been wrongly patronised should sink in the minds of party leaders for their future guidance. This is basically a reflection of criminalisation of politics feeding on brown and ill-gotten money.

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In the process, fresh leads will have been lost under the debris of wrangling as the culprits either vanish into thin air or pay their way out under the sly-eyed benefactors. In the meantime, the air will be rife with oft-repeated commitments to 'equality before law' or 'no one is above law,' or 'the guilty however powerful cannot escape justice' as public amnesia sets in till another gory event sends chill down their spines.

Something remarkable will have to be done to bring a satisfactory closure to the Narayanganj case to mark a departure from a whole series of sensational murder cases hanging fire.

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Whose Lift is it Anyway?

HUMOROUSLY YOURS



NAVEED MAHBUB

I hold the elevator door at the parking lot for a good three minutes as the well dressed lady takes her time to get out of her BMW. As she makes her majestic entrance into the elevator, there is no 'thank you'.

I have already pressed the button for my destination, the 2nd topmost floor. I ask her, "Which floor?" "The topmost one." Indifference.

Having being deprived of two thank you's I had expected, I nevertheless complete my good deed of the day, "You're more than welcome."

Then a house maid gets in. My lady friend orders her to get off, while pointing to the sign, "House staff not allowed to use the lift." She obliges. The Beamer lady is lucky that the one disembarking isn't Rosa Parks...

Now, like in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, let's transport the elevator to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). We now have our own version of *Grey's Anatomy* with all the actions of *Hawaii Five O* while christening DMCH as *St. Elsewhere*. Oh! The name of the show? It's *Whose Lift is it Anyway?*.

The use of the elevator leads to a quarrel between interns and patients' attendants, that leads to Dhaka University (DU) students vandalizing DMCH, that leads to doctors getting beaten up in Chankharpul, that leads to gates getting locked, that leads to ambulances risking being coffins on wheels (as if they already are not, thanks to traffic and peoples' nonchalant disregard to make way for them).

Bill Clinton seizes the opportunity. He vindicates himself of his relationship with Monica Lewinsky claiming the encounter with the White House intern is nothing compared to that between patients' attendants and DMCH interns.

And the DU students vandalizing DMCH? That's being short sighted. What if there's a retaliation or a raid on them and they are injured? Guess where they would have to come for medical attention...

The disease is contagious. Rajshahi Medical College Hospital's standard medical history questionnaire adds another line: "Are you a journalist?" Sikder Women's Medical College Hospital doctor holds a journalist captive. Wonder if the doctor's name, literally, is *Trapper John, MD*.

Is it that like India and Pakistan, Abahani and Mohammedan, we see neo-arch enemies among medical interns and patients' attendants, doctors and journalists?

An assault on anyone, let alone on doctors, is unacceptable. The doctors feeling insecure is justified. But a strike? There is no generator or IPS for medical load shedding as the Hippocratic Oath turns into a Hypocritic Oath...

So, how do we ensure the safety of the doctors? Perhaps the requirement for an MBBS degree should include six months of self-defense training.

Let's face it. We are a proud people with inflated egos. The classic threat during an argument: "Do you know whose son I am?" ("No, but I'll ask your mom.") So, let's live and let live -- whether we are patients, attendants of patients, doctors or journalists. Let us disagree without being disagreeable, assertive without being aggressive, verbal (at best) without being physical. At the end of the day, we are interdependent -- without doctors there is no healing, without journalists there is no reporting, without patients there is no health care industry, without patients' attendants there is no personal touch and without medical equipment spared of vandalism, we might as well stay home with an appendicitis and kiss our behinds good bye.

Let us ALL, not just the physicians, take the Hippocratic Oath.

Meanwhile, I'm at another hospital attending to my sick daughter. To the total stranger, I smile only to get a look of suspicion, I greet with a *salama* only to get a silent, "Sorry, come back on Friday" and hold the door open without expecting a 'thank you'.

Oh, and I am STRICTLY using the stairs...

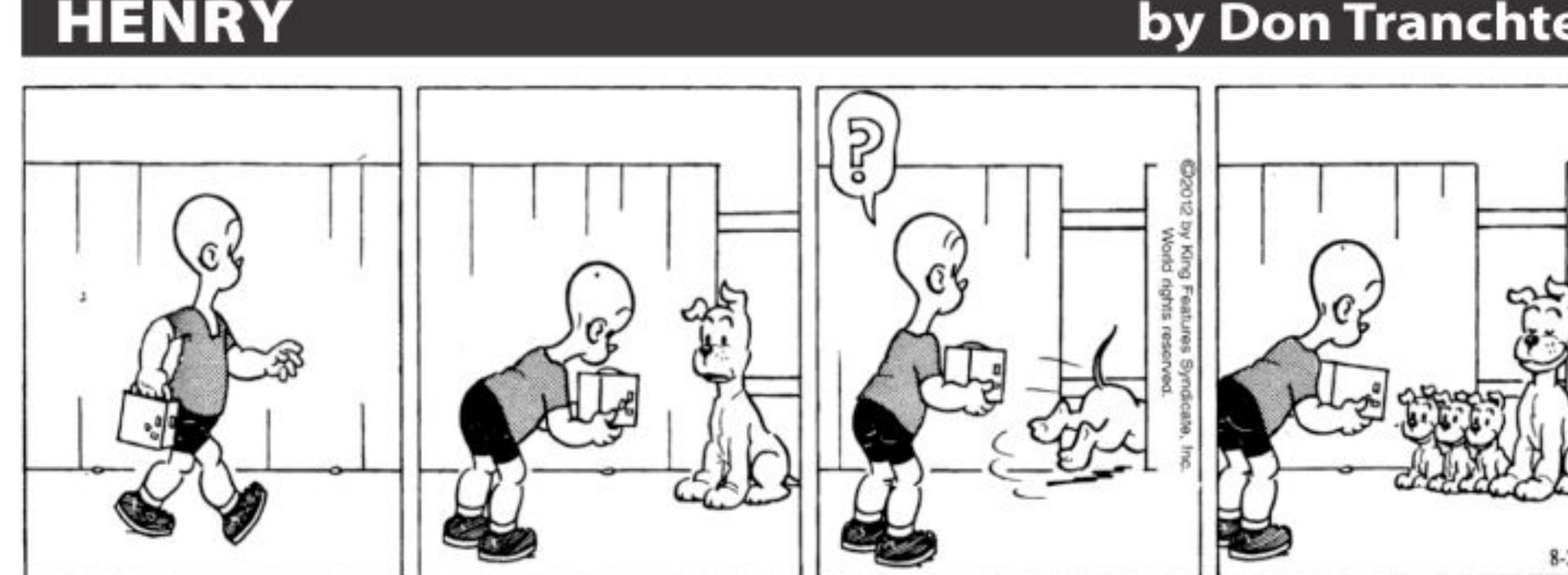
The writer is an engineer & CEO turned comedian (by choice), the host of NTV's *The Naveed Mahbub Show* and the founder of *Naveed's Comedy Club*. E-mail: naveed@naveedmahbub.com

by Mort Walker

BEETLE BAILEY



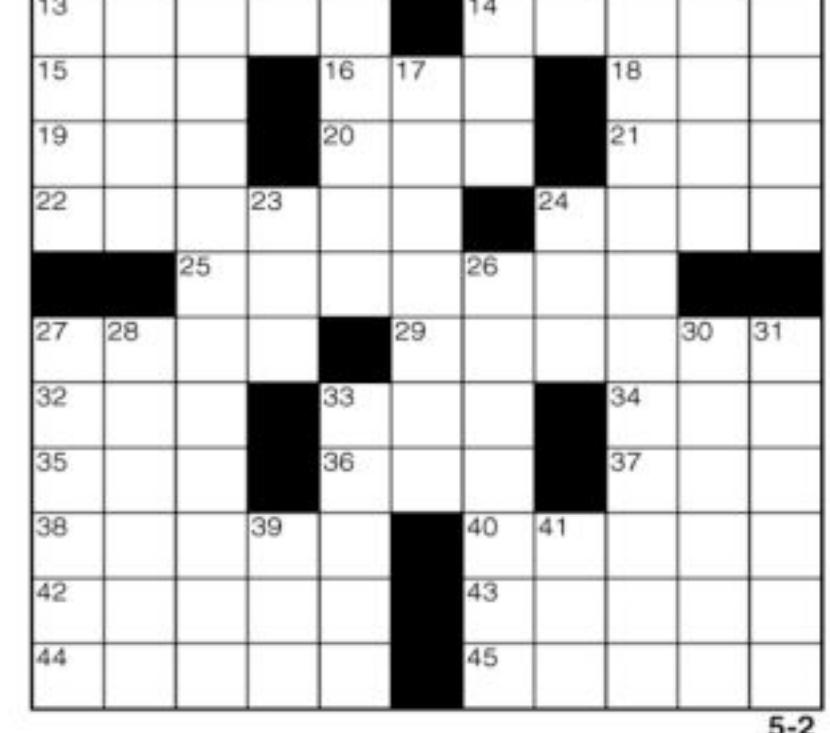
HENRY



CROSSWORD by Thomas Joseph

ACROSS

- 1 Two-masted boats
- 2 Stares stupidly
- 11 Lucy's friend
- 12 Allergy sound
- 13 Parasol offering
- 14 Get smart
- 15 Filming site
- 16 Merino mom
- 18 Brewed beverage
- 19 Powerful bunch
- 20 Big truck
- 21 Took a load off
- 22 Prefer to
- 24 Sicilian volcano
- 25 Cannabis extract
- 27 Garden starter
- 29 Comes onstage
- 32 Golf goal
- 33 L.K. fliers
- 34 Chop up
- 35 Hubbub
- 36 Ceremony words
- 37 Acting legend Hagen
- 38 Agitates
- 40 Showed over
- 42 Comic Kovacs
- 43 Madame Curie



CRYPTOQUOTE

DRWQ LZICQCSX CF IWFRK ZL FUZDL,
U Z N D W P R W L K H D Z A N L K
CLKCAARDRLUR.

-- WQIRDS UWVNF

Yesterday's CRYPTOQUOTE: THE ONLY CREATURES THAT ARE EVOLVED ENOUGH TO CONVEY PURE LOVE ARE DOGS AND INFANTS.

44

AXYDLBAXR IS LONGFELLOW

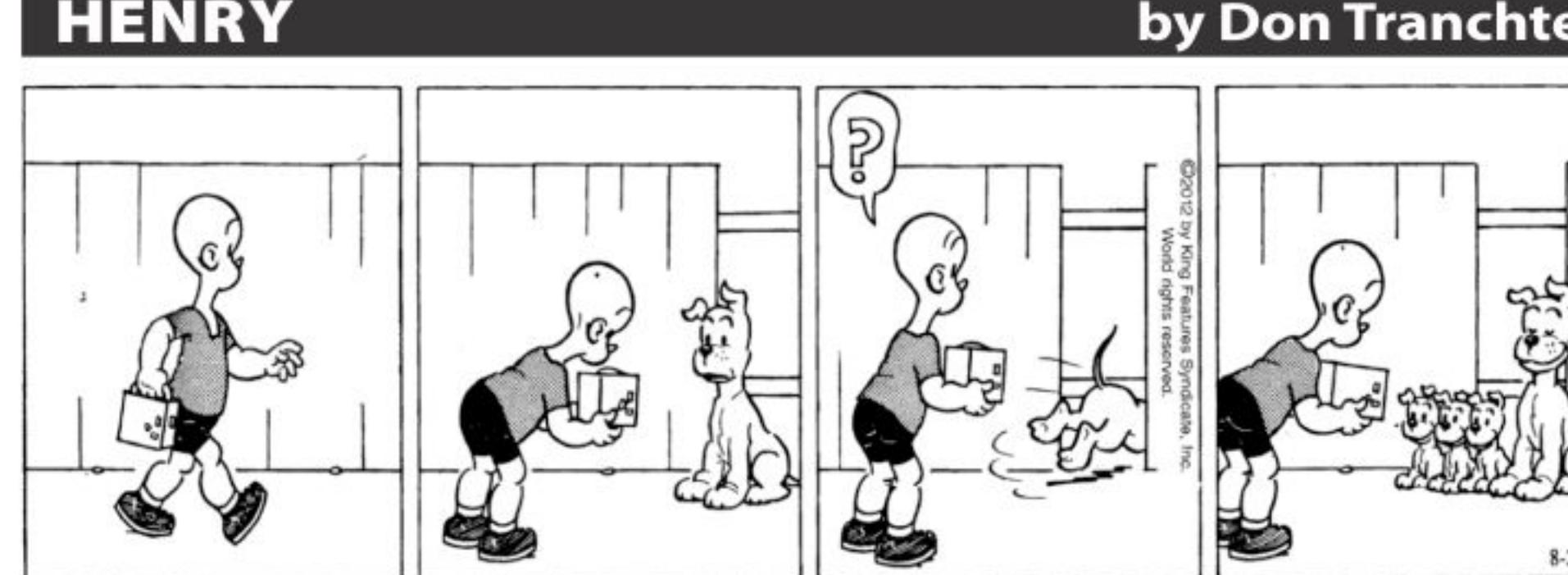
One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

by Don Trachte

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HENRY



QUOTABLE Quote

Democracy: The state of affairs in which you consent to having your pocket picked, and elect the best man to do it.

Benjamin Lichtenberg