

Question leakage: Genesis of the problem

BITTER TRUTH



MD. ASADULLAH KHAN

THE most recent incident of leakage of HSC question papers after a series of such scandals in the last SSC examinations has stunned the whole nation. The attempt of the education boards to hold both the SSC and HSC examinations peacefully after success in arresting unfair means got a severe jolt. This shows that the process, from setting of the questions up to distributing them, lacked proper planning, security measures, efficient handling and foolproof and honest endeavour.

The boys and girls at the beginning of their career, most of them sincere in pursuit of studies, were sitting for the examination that would have given them confidence and aptitude for further exercise at higher levels of education. Understandably, when a student learns just the night before the examination that the question paper of the examination he is to appear in the next morning has been leaked out and some of his peers are making use of it, his sense of confidence and competence gets totally shattered.

It is a gross neglect of responsibility of the people at the helm of affairs in the ministry concerned and education boards not to take their share of participation and onus of burden of something that has put the credibility of the boards and image of the nation at stake. This has, at the same time, made it clear that the woefully inadequate and inept infrastructure in the education sector needs to be energised on an emergency basis.

The educational scene in the country has been in the doldrums. Both guardians and students have almost lost their confidence in the education system. Teaching and learning have, these days, become commodities for sale. Students are not learning at home with any amount of seriousness. There has been a mushroom growth of coaching centres throughout the country. There has been no let up in such businesses even though the government has imposed restrictions on such business style coaching. Students taught in these centres are not learning the basics, rather they are stuffed with suggestions and probable questions. Who knows that the centres are not engaged in an unholy alliance with other agencies, as alleged, that have access to board questions.

This year's SSC and HSC question paper leakage suggests that there could have been pilferage:

(i) from the BG Press, (ii) during transit, (iii) during storage in the treasury, thana, or bank safe vault, and (iv) unfortunately though, by the teachers and moderators who had framed the questions. It is expected that the probe body formed by the government, will identify the culprits in this scam.

Such probe bodies were formed earlier but neither were their findings made public nor was there any effort to bring the culprits to book. The result: these scandals and scams go on unabated. The menace has spread too far. A press report on June 2 said that the objective type questions in Bangla, Mathematics, and General Knowledge of the college teachers' registration exam were leaked days before the examination.

People feel that there might be links between coaching centres and some unscrupulous BG Press personnel, or that some unscrupulous BG Press personnel do it alone. They are doing a great disservice to the nation at the expense of the bigger wealth -- the bright students in the country.

Teachers in the schools want their students to be admitted in the tutorial homes which they have set up. Busy guardians and, in most cases, affluent illiterate parents feel happy and relieved by just transferring the responsibility of educating their wards to the tutorial homes, but they are hardly aware of the damage they are inflicting on their wards. They realise it only when their wards cut a sorry figure in the public examinations. Actually, the country is forging ahead in a field where many countries fear to tread: the hazardous nature of teaching that doles out modules of selected questions and their answers but does not bring about any improvement in the basics.

Teachers of schools and colleges have started coaching almost on a commercial scale, often at the expense of teaching in classrooms. The concerned ministry, without refuting the claim outright or always being in the denial mode, must look into the genesis of the problem. Allowing this racket to go on would be suicidal for the nation.

Eminent educationists in the country have pointed out the ills of the present school and college level teaching. They have rightly asserted that "if the teachers perform their duties properly in teaching the students, give them regular home tasks, take regular class tests and keep them away from private tuitions, there would be no unfair practice in the examinations."

Allegations are rife that question papers are leaked out in collusion between agencies, certi-

fications are forged and deficient students are sent up for appearing at the final examinations conducted by the boards, often in exchange of high monetary benefit. Since the ills have accumulated almost from the primary level of teaching and examination, the nation has started paying a heavy price for this gross neglect, sheer indifference and total callousness of the education planners. To stem this tide of total breakdown in the system, education planners and administrators have to work with a missionary zeal at the grassroots level. There are of course some solutions already at hand to repair the damage and stop the rot from spreading any further.

The government must either ban or enforce restrictions on the growth of coaching centres or tutorial home. Centres that want to cater education this way must apply for registration, detailing the names of the teachers, their experiences and the schools and colleges where they are teaching on a regular basis, and the number of students they are handling.

Other than a handful of qualified and efficient teachers in some schools, the country suffers from a general dearth of experienced teachers in English and Mathematics. To give education at the early stage, the government can pick some good teachers from across the country and bring them to Dhaka to give at least an hour-long lecture over TV on some selected topics of textbooks of SSC and HSC stage. This would inspire students and teachers to be more responsive in their duties. There are still some teachers who are dedicated and efficient and whose services have not been recognised by the government. Their names should be forwarded to the ministry of education by a committee comprising DC, local MPs and elites of the locality. To honour these dedicated teachers, and in recognition of their qualities of head and heart, honest endeavour and selfless services they are putting in day in and day out, they should be invited to attend state level functions like the Victory Day and Independence Day celebrations.

If we can honour our heroes in games and sports, it is no less important that some of our committed teachers who are making ceaseless effort in building the edifice of the nation should also be rewarded and honoured in some way or other. In a society torn asunder by conflict and hatred and eroding fast under the influence of wealth and authoritarian spirit, we need the idealism of such teachers to show us the path of enlightenment.

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Six Points and a long-ago June

GROUND REALITIES



SYED BADRUL AHSAN

HERE are, in the annals of history, certain defining moments in the evolution of nations. In Bangladesh's case, such a moment came on February 5, 1966, when Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, general secretary of the East Pakistan Awami League, revealed in Lahore a broad-ranging formula for regional autonomy. That formula was of course the Six Point plan, which in time would lead to a wider movement and eventually an armed struggle for East Pakistan's emergence as the independent People's Republic of Bangladesh. The plan put Mujib and a large section of Bengali Awami Leaguers on a confrontation course with the All-Pakistan Awami League led by Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan. It also drew the fury of President Mohammad Ayub Khan, who openly threatened to use what he called the language of weapons against the proponents of the Six Points. The plan, as Ayub and his regime saw it, was aimed at causing Pakistan's break-up and the exit of its eastern province from the rest of the country.

The Six Points, which the East Pakistan Awami League formally adopted on March 18, 1966, were the following:

1. Pakistan will be a federation in the true sense on the basis of the Lahore Resolution of March 1940, with the form of government being parliamentary in nature and elected through universal adult franchise;

2. The federal government shall deal with only two subjects, namely, foreign affairs and defence, with all other subjects to be handled by the federating units;

3. Two separate but freely convertible currencies for the two wings of Pakistan may be introduced or a single currency be used, with guarantees that there will be no flight of capital from East to West Pakistan, the guarantees being in the form of a separate reserve bank for East Pakistan;

4. Powers of taxation and revenue collection shall vest in the federating units, with the federal government to be provided with its share of taxes through levies of a certain percentage from all state taxes;

5. There shall be two separate accounts for foreign exchange earnings for the two wings;

6. A separate paramilitary force shall be

set up for East Pakistan.

Between March and early May, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his lieutenants Tajuddin Ahmed, Syed Nazrul Islam, M. Mansoor Ali and Khondokar Moshtaque Ahmed crisscrossed the province drumming up support for the Six Points. By way of countering the groundswell of support for the plan, Governor Abdul Monem Khan, a fawning Ayub loyalist, threatened the Awami League leaders with imprisonment. On May 8 that year, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was detained under the Defence of Pakistan Rules. Most of his colleagues were carted off to prison as well, leaving the party in the hands of its acting president Syed Nazrul Islam and acting general secretary Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, who at the time was a member of the Pakistan national assembly. An embattled Awami League called a general strike (hartal) on June 7, 1966 in the province to generate support for the Six Points and call for the release of its detained leaders.

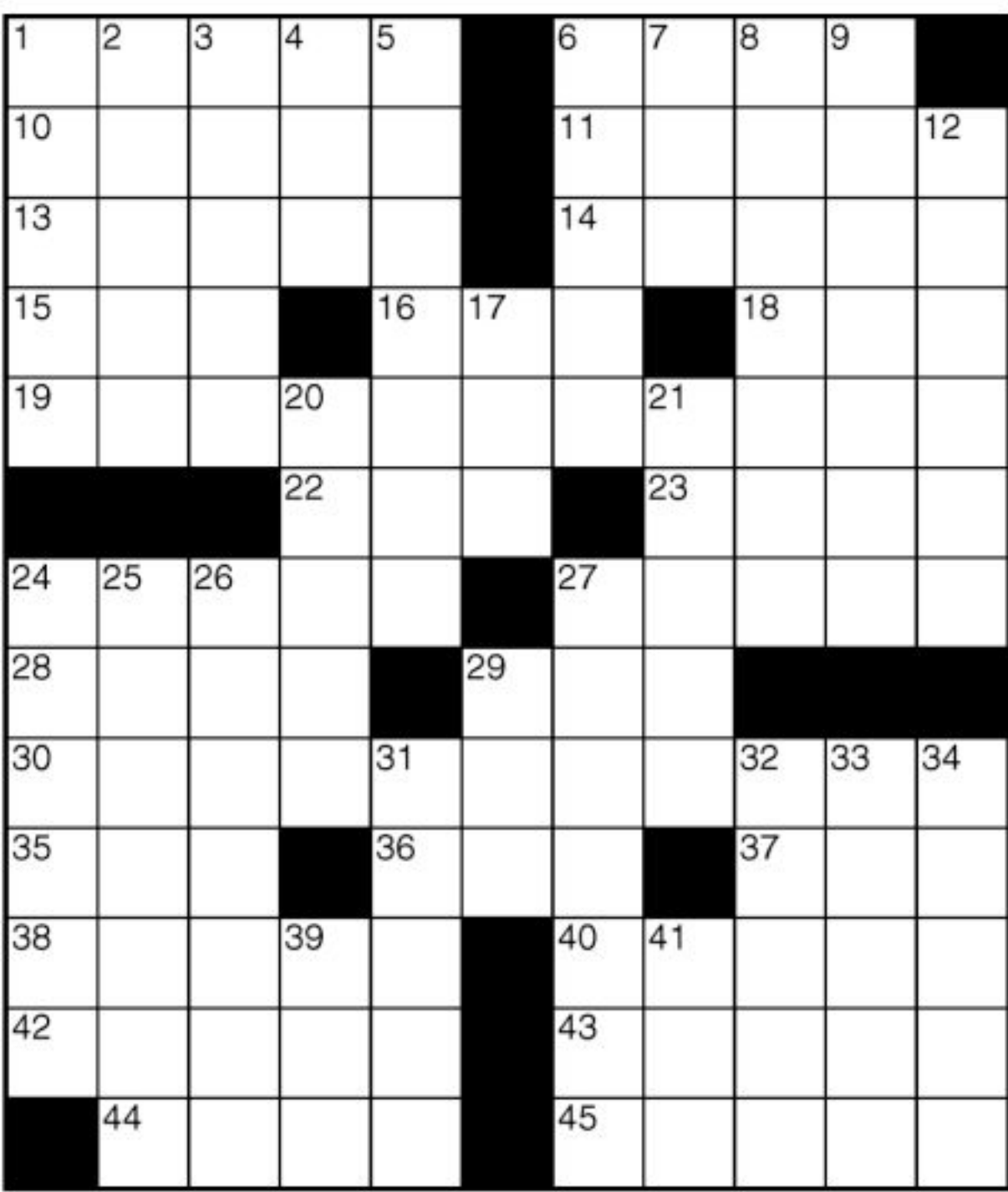
Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury played a highly visible and prominent role as he prepared the demoralised party for the strike. At the same time he and other Awami League MNAs, among whom was Professor Yusuf Ali, raised the issue of government repression in the national assembly, thereby giving the Six Points a countrywide dimension. The government, for its part, compelled newspapers in both East and West Pakistan to refrain from publishing any news of the hartal. Despite the media censorship, the hartal was observed in totality throughout East Pakistan, a fact reinforced by the deaths of a number of individuals through police firing. The following day, June 8, newspapers carried only the government version of the previous day's happenings. And the version was to portray the 'violence' of Awami League supporters on the streets.

Following the hartal, the AL decided, formally on July 23-24, to launch the second phase of the movement in August. It was at this point that Amena Begum, secretary of the women's branch of the Awami League, came in. She launched the second phase at a public meeting on August 17, 1966 in Chittagong. In the same month, she and Syed Nazrul Islam embarked on a tour of the province as part of a campaign to popularise the Six Point programme.

History was about to be redefined. And Bengalis were soon to reinvent themselves through a sure and swift rise of nationalism in their collective psyche.

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CROSSWORD by Thomas Joseph



5-26

Yesterday's answer

CHER STIR
PROVO CONES
ROSES ROAST
INTRADE WIE
DYE NEWMADE
ENDING EYED
KAREN
AFRO AMUSES
GRENADE PUP
NAG PERVADE
EMITS SITON
SENSE OVERT
SAPS NASAS

ACROSS

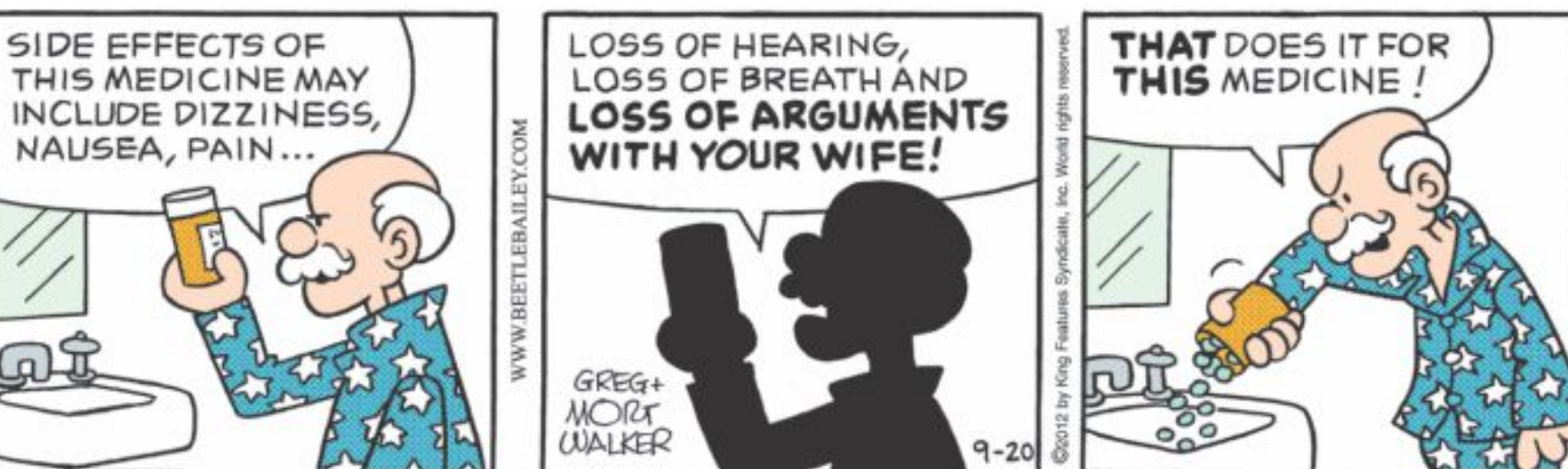
- 1 Fire remnants
- 6 Sudan neighbor
- 10 Spartacus, for one
- 11 Timber wolves
- 13 Squad car sound
- 14 Parts of hearts
- 15 Top card
- 16 Hockey great Bobby
- 18 Like winter roads
- 19 May event
- 22 Small tablet
- 23 Storybook monster
- 24 TV's Philbin
- 27 Leg joints
- 28 Baseball's Moises
- 29 Take in
- 30 Monument honoring soldiers
- 35 Life story, for short
- 36 Programming error
- 37 Future embryos
- 38 Black cattle variety
- 40 Despises
- 42 Get more out of
- 43 Separated
- 44 Actor Connery
- 45 Bird abodes

Down

- 1 Indian state
- 2 Pizza portion
- 3 Part of sheik's household
- 4 Second person
- 5 Ladies of Spain
- 6 Nurse Barton
- 7 Sizzling
- 8 Shorten
- 9 "So what?"
- 12 Be agreeable
- 17 Free (of)
- 20 Poppy yield
- 21 Solitary sort
- 24 Seafood restaurant fixture
- 25 Stritch and May
- 26 Deviate from team strategy
- 27 Phil of "The Amazing Race"
- 29 Dallas sch.
- 31 Buddy of "The Beverly Hillbillies"
- 32 Small amount
- 33 Turn aside
- 34 Endures
- 39 Mex. neighbor
- 41 Gorilla, for one

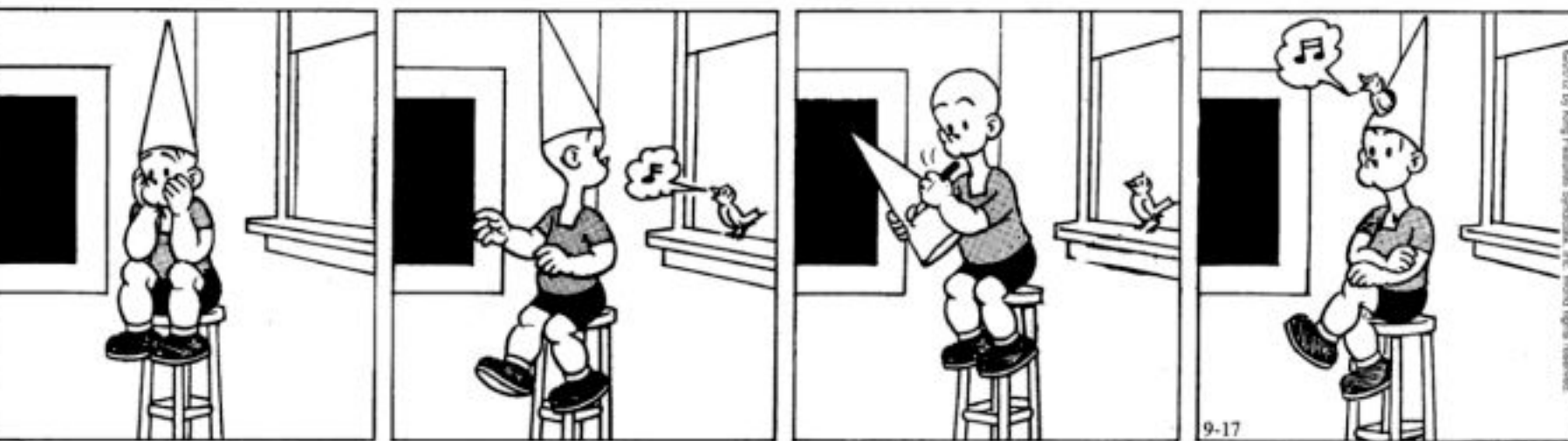
BEETLE BAILEY

by Mort Walker



HENRY

by Don Trachte



CRYPTOQUOTE

4-25

JXUMU'E RV EWNX JXHRP OE
KMHJUM'E IGVNC. JXOJ KOE HRFURJUY
IZ QUVQGU HR NOGHLVMRHO KXV
NVWGYR'J KMHJU
- JUMMZ QMOJNXUJJ

Yesterday's CRYPTOQUOTE:

FOUR BASIC PREMISES OF WRITING: CLARITY, BREVITY, SIMPLICITY, AND HUMANITY.

- WILLIAM ZINSSER

A XYDLBAAXR 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.



"I am very pleased with the way bti worked with me to find myself a new home; I always imagined it to be arduous, but bti made it simple and effective for me."

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