

Opportunities and their shelf life ...



SHAH HUSAIN IMAM

PLEASURE IS ALL MINE

NUR Hossain's arrest in Kolkata has raked up a whole series of details centering around Narayanjanj seven murder case. The critics of the government say that certain quarters had quietly allowed his exit from the country into India with a new tag of identity.

But this claim is diluted when the government had notified the Interpol, an action that moved Kolkata police to ferret Nur Hossain and his associates out and send them to the local court.

Also, as truth unfolded in a blaze of publicity, the government promptly suspended alleged Rab officials and sent them on to premature retirement. But in the face of serious incriminating evidence they had to be taken into custody. All of them, in so many words, have admitted to having had a role in the killings.

Although accused under different charges in Kolkata (illegal entry), Nur Hossain for his part at first denied and then reportedly

confessed to his involvement in the Narayanjanj serial murder -- on the sidelines of course.

Now the test for our government lies in how soon Nur Hossain is extradited from India and made to face legal proceedings in Bangladesh. In a general atmosphere of hush-hush, whether he would spill all the beans is something one has to watch out for.

This leaves Shamim Osman high and dry despite a recorded conversation that evoked an amount of finger pointing at him. But with the PM praising the loyalty of the family to the AL going back into years, Shamim may have been dropped off the radar screen.

This is not the only marker of internal feuding in the AL bursting out in the open. There may be other instances, overt or covert, that the party needs to keep a tab on and purge the undesirables before they rise as Frankenstein. No party is endangered as gravely as does the one which lowers its guard over a spoil system that engulfs a party which has been long in power.

The ruling party has a way of chameleons or criminal elements gravitating to it with ulterior motives to get-rich-quick and climb the power ladder on the sly. It is through them that politics is criminalised and governance seriously impaired. The incumbent party cannot absolve itself of any responsibility about the abuse of power by such

opportunistic elements in the party ranks.

If Narayanjanj incident has brought anything into a sharper focus it is the collusive mafia-like guild between the law enforcers and even the elected political elements in the commission of worst type of crimes.

The prime minister, may I suggest in all humility, would do well to hold her party meetings out of Gono Bhavan to reach out to the grassroots to gauge the pulse of party men across the country at first hand.

Narendra Modi in his Lok Sabha speech, after President Pranab Mukherjee's inaugural address, made it clear that MPs accused in criminal cases, (and there is a substantial percentage of them in the Lower House) will have to clear their names to stay as MPs or else lose their seats. Incidentally, during Modi's speech Rahul Gandhi was seen 'fiddling with his cell phone,' so noted M.J. Akbar, shining a spotlight on the liberal Indian democracy.

Modi is emerging as a tough taskmaster, one party follower even said that he had never seen a 'headmaster' like him. The new PM expects the cabinet to work long hours like he does (18 hours a day), so you have yawning, languid-eyed colleagues trying to keep pace with the PM on the next day. He has ruled against touching the feet as a mark of respect or sycophancy, if you like, and keeping APS from amongst relatives of the

ministers, so the words have been making rounds in the corridors of power.

Turning to the home front, part of the prime minister's hold on power comes from AL's distinguishing itself from extremist and far right elements. If her own house has any poisonous malcontent such an advantage of hers may be squandered. Our profile abroad is reliant on our constitutional and democratic identity on the one hand and religious moderation and cultural homogeneity on the other. We cannot allow any inroad to be made into this twin identity of ours.

One has to pinch one's skin to realise that such words could have been uttered by our prime minister. She reportedly said recently whilst reacting to the foreign dignitaries meeting BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia that the latter does not represent legitimate opposition in parliament (so why meet her?). For all one knows, very few have met Rowshan Ershad, the official opposition leader. And as reported, though not firmly yet, Sushma Swaraj, Indian external affairs minister, may meet Khaleda Zia during her important trip to Dhaka, preceding, one would hope, a transformative visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Bangladesh.

The writer is Associate Editor, *The Daily Star*.
E-mail: husain.imam@thedailystar.net

Oborodh 2.0



NAVEED MAHUB

HUMOROUSLY YOURS

THE Bangladesh versus India match sees the highest score in the history of, er, uhm, ...World Cup Football? Easy on the flak. As Shakib himself said that the Tigers can fumble under the pressure of too many fans watching (hmm, is that why he aceed it at the IPL?). And the fans are watching indeed -- the Amazon region. Had that not been the case, the final score may have been a standard FIFA game.

And those eyes of the fans? Well, they are on Pepe and Mueller as they collide. The former pokes, runs, stops, turns around, walks over, bends down and then butts his head with that of the latter, who is already busy massaging his area of earlier impact. Now, that's a lot of effort just to get the red card. Well, I guess Pepe bends over for all the wrong reasons...

Now, add formalin to *pepe* (papaya) and *mula* (radish). We see the collision between the road roller and the produce. The less fortunate braves it all to beat the roller to grab a few mangoes for his kids. Oh a small doze of formalin is like a miniscule dose of X-ray -- won't hurt. It's a *Game of Bones* -- quickly grab free mangoes or have the bones crushed by the road roller. The *Mango Crush* gives the roads a fresh layer of formalin. Good! Here's to the roads lasting all the way through monsoon!

So, the 'Straight from CNG (Chapai Nawab Ganj)' mango stalls are empty. With raids on adulterated food, suppliers are just taking a break while applying some extra formalin so that the fruits survive till the raids (and now the strikes) are over.

It's *Oborodh 2.0* -- truck loads of produce heading towards the capital city, intercepted by law enforcement, armed with the formidable formalin buster, Formaldehyde Meter Z-300. Uhm, isn't it used to measure toxins in the air, rather than on a plastic coated fruit? That's like trying to find MH 370 with a pair of binoculars.

Despite best efforts, the match between RAB and FAB (Formalin Association of Bangladesh) remains the Brazil versus Mexico game, at best.

FAB is bold and may soon have its own billboards (in Bangla, remember, English ones have to be taken down, sorry S@ifurs) with a young, attractive lady smiling, "Pure formalin is the secret of my beauty -- I am 105."

It is a shame. Bangladesh is the global role model in food security. And that despite having 30% of its land degraded from natural and man-made causes, without which the country would also be ahead of Neptune. And yet it's kamikaze when it comes to feeding ourselves.

So what do we do? Bangladesh is one of only five countries in the world that has seen a decline in the average height of its people. Aha, so the models are not tall, I'm just a tad shorter! If we stop eating fruits, vegetables and fish, we are looking at a nation of hobbits.

How about tax the toxin to stop human taxidermy? Ok, now don't slap taxes on Mango Teleservices, Orange Telecom, Banana Republic, Apple and Blackberry -- they do NOT contain formalin.

Second, continue the collective Guillermo Ochoa by not allowing any adulterated food to pass through.

Finally, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. With adulterated fruit, it's fruit for a fruit. Instead of crushing the mangoes, how about force the perpetrators, if not at gunpoint, then at least at vuvuzela point, to eat all the mangoes? Oh by the way, all in one go. Nah, not enough. Mix the feast with *naga* chilies while seven vuvuzelas toot three inches away from the ears till the last one is consumed.

Let's see which is the last one standing - conscience or non-perishable fruits.

Meanwhile, how about the UN carry out some formalin free food drops?

The writer is an engineer & CEO turned comedian (by choice), the host of NTV's *The Naveed Mahub Show*

Unresolved conflicts leading to prolonged displacement

Addressing the origins of persecution and statelessness

STINA LJUNGDELL

AROUND the world, conflicts force large numbers of people to flee within or across national borders. In 1971, the Bangladeshi Liberation War created the largest refugee flow in the world and at the time no one knew how long the situation would last. Fortunately, the Bangladeshis could return home in less than a year, but many other refugees remain displaced for decades.

Today, for the first time in the post-World War II era, more than 50 million people remain forcefully displaced. Nine out of ten refugees are residing in developing countries and internal displacement (33.3 million people) has never been higher.

In the Rakhine State of Myanmar, about 140,000 people have been forced to leave their homes in the aftermath of inter-communal violence in June and October 2012. The majority of them are the Rohingya, with smaller numbers of Rakhine, Kaman and other ethnicities. Most of the Rohingya are living in temporary camps and shelters with restriction on their freedom of movement and a lack of basic healthcare. Reports suggest that they are subjected to different forms of extortion, forced labour and arbitrary taxation including financial restrictions on marriage.

Under the Burma Citizenship Act of

1982, Myanmar has granted citizenship to 135 different ethnic groups, but not the Rohingya. Instead the Rohingya population remains stateless and the Myanmar government constantly reaffirms that this group is not welcome in Myanmar. Therefore, the plight of the Rohingya is twofold -- they are subjected to serious human rights violations and they are also stateless.

Given this situation, thousands of Rohingya have continued to flee Myanmar and sought safety elsewhere. Abuse and exploitation are common along the way and many lose their lives at sea. A statement published by UNHCR last week shows that an estimated 86,000 people, mostly Rohingya, have sailed on boats since June 2012. More than 1,300 have died on the journey and hundreds have been ill-treated in overcrowded camps run by traffickers and people smugglers.

The strain and burden placed on neighbouring countries as a result of this refugee crisis is huge. There are more than 30,000 refugees from Myanmar registered in two official camps in south-eastern Bangladesh. These refugees receive assistance and protection from the Bangladesh government and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). Sadly, the prolonged displacement is having a severe impact on their mental health as they have sat idle for more than 22 years waiting to go home and to start their lives again. Approximately 60% of the camp population

has been born in Bangladesh. Unlike the Bangladeshi refugees, the Rohingya have had to endure the sad fate of watching their children be born and raised in a refugee camp.

To alleviate their stress and daily sufferings, the Bangladeshi government has recently agreed to improve the shelter and living conditions in the refugee camps. Education has been extended to the secondary level and female police have been deployed inside the camps to help address the wide spread gender-based violence. Vocational trainings and Burmese language classes are run regularly to build self-reliance and prepare the refugees for their voluntary return to Myanmar, when the situation in Rakhine state improves.

Concern still remains for an additional 200,000 to 500,000 undocumented Rohingya who live outside the two official refugee camps and are not registered as refugees. They do not have any legal status and thus have no access to basic services or the Bangladeshi justice system. Since these unregistered Rohingya are in Bangladesh "illegally," they remain vulnerable to exploitation and can easily be taken advantage of by criminal entities.

Late last year, government of Bangladesh adopted a national strategy with regards to Myanmar refugees and undocumented Myanmar nationals. This strategy entails a plan to "list" the unregistered population

which, if carried out in accordance with international standards, would be a positive step towards recognising the existence of this population. An identification exercise would also guide the planning of humanitarian response and lay the groundwork for a future voluntary repatriation when the conditions in Myanmar have sufficiently improved. Given UNHCR's global experience in registering and documenting different populations for over six decades, we have offered our assistance and are hopeful that the government will take up the offer.

Bangladesh has generously hosted the Rohingya population for over two decades, but it is not alone. The conflict in Rakhine State in Myanmar has given rise to a regional problem that now spans across Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and India. UNHCR is advocating for these host countries to grant the Rohingya temporary stay arrangements until the situation stabilises sufficiently in Rakhine State for them to return.

Although UNHCR can alleviate the suffering of displaced populations, it takes political decisions to resolve the root causes of conflicts and achieve peaceful co-existence of communities. On this World Refugee Day, let us all urge the international community to pave the way for a peaceful solution which will allow the Rohingya to finally return to the society that they were once part of.

TIGERS IN THE MUD

SYED BADRUL AHSAN

TIGERS are noted for their sense of pride and self-esteem. There is the heritage of the Royal Bengal Tiger, even if the beast is today in decline. In numbers, that is. We have had, additionally, cause to attribute the qualities of tigers to some of the bravest and illustrious men we have known in history. Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Huq was a *sher*, a tiger, because of his bold politics. On the cricket pitch, Tiger Pataudi did wonders, despite that lack of vision in one eye. In our War of Liberation, Tiger Siddiqui made us proud with his exploits against the Pakistan army. In Sri Lanka, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam waged war for years in defence of the rights of the country's Tamils.

At this point of time, we have a miniature version of tigers who happen to be the stars of Bangladesh's cricket world. The men who decided that our Bengali cricketers

should be called tigers perhaps had little idea of the qualities of tigers. These tigers have just lost, cheerfully, another match. Those who beat them were a B-grade Indian team which did poorly on its own runs. In the end, those runs turned out to be better than the miserable fifty eight that our ferocious tigers came up with. Shame? You feel it, the country feels it. But not our tigers.

Shame is not a word in their dictionary. One of these tigers unabashedly attempts to demonstrate his sexual prowess before television cameras. He does not know the meaning of lewdness. This same tiger leaves the cricketers' box, makes his way to the visitors' gallery and engages in fisticuffs with a couple of viewers for reasons that could have been handled in a more sophisticated manner. And now we hear that another tiger, because of his corrupt acts, has been banned from cricket for eight years. Eight years from now, you can be sure, cricket will remember him as a mere footnote.

On billboards across town, you spot two tigers. One is real. The other is a paper one, sheer insult for the real tiger. Even the tiger Mrs. Packettide shot, or induced into death through cardiac arrest, long ago would be red in the face watching those billboards. These paper tigers advertise glamour products for men's skin. They are a pampered lot, undeservingly rich. They own homes and cars and are part of our increasingly hollow glitterati, arriviste Bengali men and Bengali women who, in faux western manner, go for behaviour which is decadently snobbish. They feel no shame at all.

The dignity of the tiger must be restored. The first move towards that is to strip our cricketers of the honorific of tigers. Tigers leap and run. They do not crawl and roll in the mud.

The writer is Executive Editor, *The Daily Star*.
E-mail: bahsantareq@yahoo.co.uk

QUOTE
Quote

Why is there only one ball for 22 players? If you gave a ball to each of them, they'd stop fighting for it.

Author Unknown

CROSSWORD by Thomas Joseph

ACROSS

- Work group
- Surrounded by
- Romantic sort
- Generous one
- Isolated
- Plow producer
- More salacious
- Wonder
- Exalted poem
- Recyclable item
- Like go-go boots
- More than enough
- CBS founder
- Service item
- Rap's -Kim
- Surgeon's pincers
- Dogfight pro
- "-Town"
- Show malice toward
- Isolated
- Provinces
- Copycat's cry

DOWN

- Downhill course
- Sword-making city
- Self-declared
- Ward (off)
- Bingo card center
- Annex
- Skier Tommy
- Short play
- Scandinavian nation
- Putting site
- Flattened fruit treats
- Probe's destination
- Some amount of
- Lobbying grp.
- Pate cover
- Book goofs
- Hidden
- 2002 aniamted film
- Landlord
- Lathers

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

CRYPTOQUOTE

PI W OUXNR WOUNU PK IX
FPCCUNUITU ZUWGUUI WOUXNR VIF
MNVTWPTU. PI MNVTWPTU WOUNU
PK. - RXHP ZUNNV

YESTERDAY'S CRYPTOQUOTE: A PURPOSE, AN INTENTION, A DESIGN, STRIKES EVERYWHERE EVEN THE CARELESS, THE MOST STUPID THINKER

- DAVID HUME

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

SCUBA STUDY
PANEL ERNIE
ADDIS TIDAL
EGOS DELL
ACRE OVER
HUT PLINTHS
ABHOR ETHEL
BEEPERS ERA
TEST PREP
LIAR EZRA
URBAN EIDER
NOLTE SCARE
KNEED TERRY

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.

BEETLE BAILEY

GET TO WORK, YOU LAZY BUM!

GREG+ MORT WALKER

HENRY

by Mort Walker

WHO PUT SARGE ON MY SCREEN SAVER?!

HUT! HUT! HUT!!

by Don Trachte

HEAR THE ROAR OF THE OCEAN IN MODERN STEREO 2¢ FOR FIVE MINUTES