

Almost another Bangladesh, second liberation

PLEASURE IS ALL MINE



SHAH HUSAIN IMAM

BANGLADESH now has 1,18,813 sq km of territorial sea and the size of the country is 1,47,570 sq km. Our rights have been established over 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone and a substantial share of the extended continental shelf vis-a-vis Myanmar and India. Thus, we have maritime zone almost the size of the country itself.

Now legal battles with India and Myanmar ensue over our claim to the continental shelf up to 400-460 nautical miles from the coast. When these disputes will have been resolved, the difference between the size of Bangladesh and that of its territorial waters might disappear.

Yes, we are on the list of 50 countries waiting for arbitration on their disputes, but that does not stop us from tapping in on or harnessing maritime resources we are clearly entitled to, bar a 'gray area' coming in where our EEZ ends and the Indian one begins. But India has fishing rights there and we have an access to seabed resources, a relatively difficult option to have wittingly bargained for.

Add the new accretions fronting out to the sea at the rate of 12.5 sq km per year since 1973 and you look at a sizable landmass in the next 50 years. All these impart a sense of fullness to our being.

The threat of sea surge by global warming gobbling up low-lying parts of Bangladesh is yet a distant thunder. At any rate, the right to territorial waters will give us an opportunity to research the hydrological dynamics of the sea up close and brace for the effects better equipped.

Forty-three years since Bangladesh was born, we are poised to reap fruits of national independence through the delimitation of our maritime boundary. If for the war that gave birth to Bangladesh we had shed sweat, tears and blood on an unprecedented scale, our share of maritime territory comes to us through a civilised mode of conflict resolution: Consensus between the disputing countries to agree to a process of arbitration, as well as a unanimous verdict of the UN special tribunal.

Before we prise open the many-faceted bounty we need to comprehend that our cycle of acquiring attributes of sovereignty is being completed now. We have had a land of our own and sky overhead but these are limited in size (sacrosanct as they are), so the internationally sanctioned opening out of the Bay sets our mind free as an ancient sea-faring nation raring to put to sea once again. That way it is a second liberation.

Some media reports in India convey a sense though, that certain circles have been upset by the judgment but the official reaction has been a graceful acceptance. The dissenting note of the Indian representative has been dubbed in New Delhi as being merely of archival, and not material value.

The solidity of the gains we are poised

to reap overall is slowly sinking in. We are beginning to learn it is better to be lucky (and we have been twice lucky with Myanmar and India) than perhaps rich. But nothing like a combination of both. Our image is lifted with the prospect of FDI flows being enhanced. The hesitant investors in hydrocarbons will be enthused to come forward for off-shore explorations. For all practical purposes though, Bapex has the golden opportunity to reorganise and revamp itself for

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the big job ahead.

Like the gold rush in the USA, the British striking oil in Saudi soil, once called the liquid gold, and diamond mines discovered in South Africa, many countries are scrambling in the deep-ocean mineral mining rush. BBC says, leading United Nations official described the scale of mineral deposits in the world's oceans as "staggering" with "several hundred years' worth of cobalt and nickel." It is estimated that the potential for food under the sea if fully tapped can feed the world population a few times over for ages.

Under the UN's Convention on the Law of the Sea, mining rights on the ocean floor are controlled by a little-known body, the International Seabed Authority, which since 2001 has issued 13 licences -- with another six in prospect. These licences valid for 15 years have been bought for \$500,000 each by government organisations, state-owned corporations and private companies from countries including China, India, Russia,

Japan and South Korea (Source: BBC News Science & Environment March 14, 2013).

A final word is gleaned from a little-known history: Between 15th and 17th century Bangladesh had been a centre for building ocean-going vessels in Asia and was itself sea-faring. Given the rapid growth of ship building industry, it's firmly poised to be the second largest exporter after garments in 2015. All in good time for a sea-faring nation reincarnate.

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Shakib Redemption

HUMOROUSLY YOURS



NAVEED MAHBUB

THIS is the closest FIFA gets to ICC. It's 7 for 1 in 90 minutes. No, it's not due to Neymar's absence, otherwise one vertebra of his would have a valuation of seven goals.

We also learn that 'boo' sounds the same in Portuguese. Nevertheless, the Brazilian fans stick around to the end. Oh

wait! Those are yellow coloured empty seats. The melancholy spills over to the German goal keeper too -- he also wanted to score a goal.

One thing is for sure, the game is worthy of being aired on Comedy Central.

"See? Playing in front of a home crowd is a LOT of pressure!" re-iterates Shakib Al Hasan. Hey, how about Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) gives Shakib a No Objection Certificate (NOC) to play in Brazil?

Well, it's Pepe's head, Suarez's jaw, Neymar's vertebra, Romero's hand (thank heavens not Maradona's) and now, Shakib's behind.

Shakib's sentencing is not just for his argument with a spectator as that would have landed him an endorsement gig for *Scare and Handsome*. Or for quarrelling with the coach as we always do with our parents. It's also not for heading off to the Caribbean without an NOC as he came home, said sorry and claimed to have left with a verbal nod.

Well, let's see what Sir Winston Churchill has to say: "Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference".

Aha! So, that goes for even if there is a problem with that very attitude.

The length of the sentence will surely turn Shakib into Mahatma Gandhi, not only in demeanour but also in cricketing age.

I guess there is no punishment without a punishment. Let Bangladeshi cricket suffer for a year and a half for the crimes of one guy. No big deal. Hey, we're doing just fine after sacrificing a bridge for one person.

But what if Shakib's attitude is a defense against mediocrity? What if he wakes up with a good attitude and then idiotic things happen? What if he thinks he doesn't have an attitude problem but rather the BCB has a problem with his attitude which in turn is not really his problem? Or is it his attitude or his personality that the BCB can't handle? Or is it simply his style and not his attitude? Or, is it an attitude problem or a perception problem?

Yes, no, I don't know. But the fact remains that he's just another native of this country where everyone, starting from my 2 year old, has an attitude. Here's a common threat, turbo charged with attitude, "You probably don't know who you're talking to." My response, "Actually I don't. If you were really somebody, I would have known."

We all have attitudes. It's just that those of the famous are noticed. So, if the world's top all rounder shows some attitude, well, that's the side dish with the steak.

Am I a blind Shakib fan? No. Am I a BCB hater? No. But that doesn't stop me from writing on the issue as I have a 600 word quota to do so. A punishment was in the offing. No disagreement. The question is whether the punishment fits the crime. How about slapping a hefty fine on Shakib and channelling the money to anger management research?

Let's see what pans out in this drama. At least for now, Shakib has a lot of free time. Play some video games with another man with a lot of leisure -- Suarez. How about *Mortal Kombat*. Er, I'm sure there's a better choice of games.

And the BCB? Hire a few meteorologists to get Shakib attitude forecasts and then let the Tigers set sail, with a FULL crew.

Meantime Shakib, for iftar, try eating a humble pie...

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

WORLD POPULATION DAY

Achieving Millennium Development Goals for sustainable future

M.A. JABBAR

WORLD Population Day is observed on July 11 every year to raise awareness about global population issues, and seeks attention and action related to the opportunities and challenges for the global population. The Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme established the event in 1989. In 1950, five years after the founding of the United Nations, world population was estimated at around 2.6 billion. According to UN estimates, the figure reached 5 billion in 1987 and 6 billion in 1999. In 2011, the UN Population Fund kicked off the 7 billion action campaign to meet the opportunities and challenges presented by the world population. It is expected that the 7.14 billion world population now will probably be 8 billion by 2030.

The trend of growth of the world population as shown above has profound implications for development. It is both a challenge and an opportunity in terms of sustainability, urbanisation, access to health services and youth and women empowerment. Let us discuss some important issues.

A UN report reveals that every day, almost 800 women die in pregnancy or at childbirth. Every two minutes, the loss of a mother shatters a family and threatens the well-being of surviving children. Evidence shows that infants whose mothers die are more likely to die before reaching their second birthday than infants whose mothers survive. Of the hundreds of thousands of women who die during pregnancy or childbirth each year, 90% live in Africa and Asia. The majority of women die from severe bleeding, infections, eclampsia, obstructed labour and the consequences of unsafe abortions.

Working for the survival of mothers is a human rights imperative. It also has many

socio-economic implications and is a crucial international development priority. Both the international conference on Population and Development and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) aim at the following goals: (i) all women will have access to contraception to avoid unintended pregnancies, (ii) all pregnant women will have access to skilled care at the time of birth, and (iii) all those with complications will have timely access to quality emergency obstetric care.

In 2008, UNFPA established the Maternal Health Thematic Fund to increase the capacity of national health systems to provide a broad range of quality maternal health services to reduce health inequalities and empower women to exercise their right to maternal health. UNFPA has also formed a team with five partners -- Unicef, the World Bank, World Health Organization, UNAIDS and UN Women -- to accelerate progress in saving the lives of women and newborns. The agencies have helped member countries to make commitments to the global initiative and the UN's MDGs, and to mobilise the financial, technical and human resources needed to meet their commitments.

Further, UN data reveal that about 16 million girls under age 18 give birth each year. Another 3.2 million undergo unsafe abortions; 90% of the pregnant adolescents in the developing world are married. But far too many of these girls have little to do with informed choice. They also face consequences of discrimination, rights violations including child marriage, inadequate education, and sexual coercion. World Population Day is an opportunity to seek attention and action of the world leaders, and raise awareness of the governments and individuals for the welfare of global population.

Bangladesh context
Bangladesh ended 2012 with a population of 154,695,368, which represents an increase of 1,832,937 people compared to

2011. As per data, Bangladesh is in eighth position among the 182 countries. The male population is greater with 78,346,922 men, representing 50.64% of the total, compared to 76,348,446 (49.35%) women. The country has a high population density with 1,074 people per square km.

Millennium Development Goals: Bangladesh perspective
Millennium Development Goals are multi-dimensional development targets agreed by the leaders of the UN member states in 2000, and are to be achieved by 2015. As a welfare country, Bangladesh has been working seriously to achieve the MDGs. Bangladesh has done well with regards to MDG targets in expansion of primary and secondary education, reduction in many aspects of women's empowerment and gender disparity, eradication of hunger, environmental sustainability, and reduction of maternal, infant and child mortality. Giving priority to gender equality as a human right, Bangladesh has done everything possible so that women can live in dignity and freedom, and free from want and fear. It has given priority to bringing down maternal and infant mortality rate to the desired level through participation and coordinated efforts of the government and private entrepreneurs. Apart from government efforts, various non-government organisations including Unicef, UNFPA and WHO are jointly implementing different programmes on mother and child health.

Surveys conducted by different UN organisations in 2013 reveal that maternal mortality rate in Bangladesh stood at 170 per 100,000 live births. In 1990, the rate was 574 per 100,000 live births according to health directorate health bulletin-2013, while Bangladesh maternal mortality survey by National Institute of Population Research and Training (NIPORT) in 2010

records the rate 194 per 100,000.

The above success of Bangladesh has been reflected through receiving of the MDG-4 and South-South Awards for its remarkable contribution in reducing the child mortality rate and providing health care services using information technology. Bangladesh also received awards from Global Alliance of Vaccination and Immunization in 2009 and 2012 for its outstanding success in the regular immunisation programme for children.

Child Act 2013 is a milestone for protection of vulnerable children. The act is harmonised with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child (CRC).

In spite of the above achievements, attention has to be focused on poverty reduction and employment generation; increase in the primary school completion rate and adult literacy rate; creation of more wage employment for women; increase in the presence of skilled health professionals at delivery; knowledge of HIV/AIDs, etc.

The present government has been earnestly working to promote Information and Communication Technology (ICT) among all sectors in order to fulfill the government vision of 'Digital Bangladesh' by 2021.

This is the age of international cooperation. No country can work and survive alone. Bangladesh is a developing country striving to achieve various socio-economic targets for the welfare of the people. In this connection, international cooperation is essential along with government efforts. As signatories to the MDGs, developed countries should come forward and assist Bangladesh and other developing/least developed countries to achieve a sustainable future.

The writer is Executive Secretary, ADHUNIK.

QUOTABLE Quote

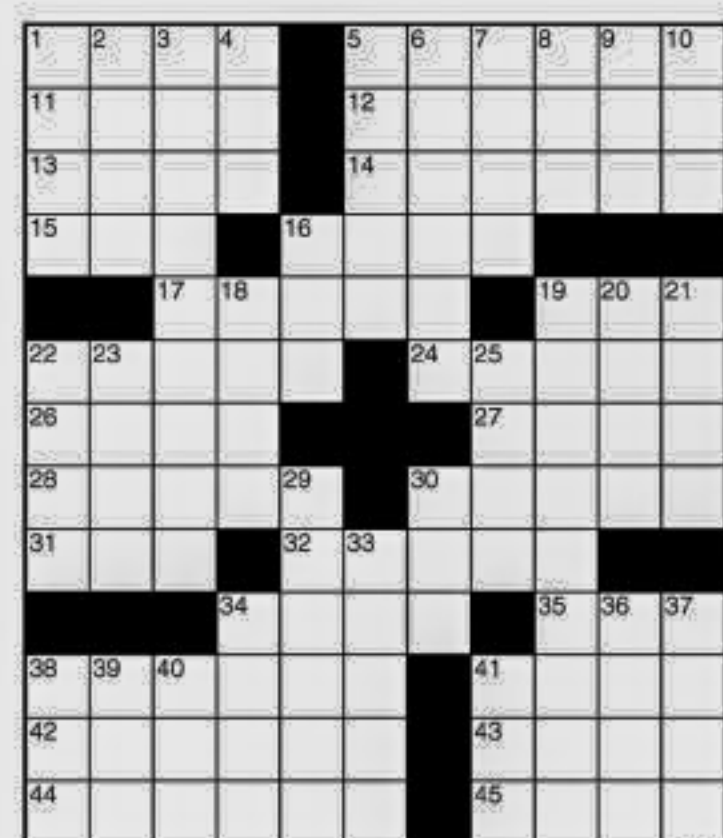
"Our chief want is someone who will inspire us to be what we know we could be."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

CROSSWORD by Thomas Joseph

ACROSS
1 Play parts
5 Used a vintage phone
11 Had on
12 Concert bonus
13 Banded stone
14 What regulars run up
15 Zodiac cat
16 Join together
17 Grammar topic
19 Is able to
22 Following
24 Hokey
26 Existence
27 Memory unit
28 Norse inlet
30 Helpful push
31 Knight's title
32 Parting word
34 Veep's boss
35 Black gunk
38 "Rabbit, Run" writer
41 Bushy do
42 Blotto
43 Go it along
44 Hearts, e.g.
45 School dance

DOWN
1 MP's quarry
2 Volcano shape
3 Seek, as a role
4 Gender
5 Work on code
6 Shortly
7 Plot unit
8 Auction unit
9 Memorable time
10 Coming out girl
16 Way off
18 Oracle
19 Need badly
20 Colony members
21 Russian refusal
22 Landon and others
23 Pacific nation
24 Bassoon's kin
25 Knave
29 Cloud over
30 Trade, for short
33 Actions
34 Print unit
36 Woody's son
37 Hotel unit
38 GI entertainers
39 Golf goal
40 Used a spade
41 Nile serpent



CRYPTOQUOTE
Z NIOZY RPNSIO HI QCJTPBSO PT FPKO, LSY PYT TODER - KHFPEOFKO YCZY UZMOTTHUOHFO IOZDDJ TOVJ.
-- WPWPZK RHV

Yesterday's CRYPTOQUOTE:
A RETENTIVE MEMORY MAY BE A GOOD THING, BUT THE ABILITY TO FORGET IS THE TRUE TOKEN OF GREATNESS.
-- ELBERT HUBBARD

Yesterday's answer

A S T A G E A R S
S L O M O A G R E E
C A N A D A G O O S E
A L I E T A M E N
P O T A S H P A N T
M E N S A A S T O
D A B A T
R I L E A L T A R
A G E S S L I C E S
S U N I C E U S A
C A N A D A G A M E S
A N O D E E V E N S
L A N D S A N D Y

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

by Mort Walker

