

A week that may change the world

POLITICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE



SALEEMUL HUQ

I have just returned from spending an exhilarating and exhausting week in New York where I was one of the thirty-eight representatives from global civil society invited to attend the

UN Climate Summit at the invitation of the Secretary General Ban Ki Moon. On Saturday I was invited to spend the afternoon in South Bronx with the South Bronx Unite community of people affected by Hurricane Sandy who are still struggling for environmental justice for the vulnerable communities. Their spirit of community was truly humbling and their music and street theatre was amazing. I was struck by how similar the struggles of the community of the South Bronx were to communities in Bangladesh. The same evening I was invited to speak to the Bangladeshi community in the Jackson Heights part of Queens at an event organised by the Bangladesh Environmental Network who are very active in the New York area.

The next day, Sunday, I joined the Peoples Climate March with the Bangladeshis under the BEN banner who were in turn part of the South Asian groups who were given the privilege by the March organisers of being up at the front of the march among the "Front Line Communities." It was also nice to be joined by a number of alumni of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development who live in the New York area and who

brought an ICCCAD banner to join the march.

It was by far the most exhilarating experience I have had as I marched with the South Asians from Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Pakistan and Bhutan who had come not just from New York but from across the USA, including California. We marched together to the fantastic rhythm of the contingent of Sikh drummers (indeed the drums are still ringing in my ears).

On Monday, as the heads of government and their official delegations started to arrive, I donned my suit and tie and went to brief some of the ministers and heads of delegation from the Least Developed Countries (LDC) including the ministers of Bangladesh, the Gambia, Nepal (who chair the LDC Group in the UNFCCC) and Benin (who chair the LDC Group in the SDG negotiations).

Finally, on Tuesday the official Climate Summit started in the United Nations General Assembly hall with an opening ceremony with speeches from the UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, the chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Dr. R.K. Pachauri, and the actor and newly appointed UN Special Envoy on climate change Leonardo Di Caprio. However, the entire assembly came to a standing ovation (something that rarely happens in that location) in response to a moving poem delivered by the poet Ms. Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner from the Marshall Islands to her newly born daughter (who also joined her on the podium at the end).

Then the heads of governments from over a hundred countries, including President Obama from the United States of America, Francois Hollande from France and many others, made their individual four-minute speeches each where they

described what they were doing to combat climate change and what more they were prepared to do. Many of the heads of government echoed the demands for action from the Peoples Climate March from two days ago and some of them made some significant promises. Amongst the most important was the commitment from both the USA and China as the two biggest emitters of Greenhouse Gases to take ambitious actions, as well as a pledge from France to provide \$1 billion towards tackling climate change in developing countries.

From my perspective, I was very pleased to see the heads of government from the LDCs, including Bangladesh, Nepal, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Benin and many others, stress the fact that the LDCs, while the most vulnerable and poorest countries are actually leading the world on tackling climate change impacts at home in every country. Thus changing the narrative of the LDCs from passive victims to proactive leaders for actions to tackle climate change.

After the heads of government had given their speeches a number of civil society groups and business leaders also made pledges for actions to tackle climate change. Then there were a number of parallel sessions on different themes, including science, energy, forestry, agriculture, transport, finance and voices from front line vulnerable communities. I attended the sessions on science and voices from the frontline communities.

As I took a taxi to the airport to catch my flight out of JFK airport, I started talking to the taxi driver, Shafiq, who turned out to be from Dhaka, Bangladesh and had been in been living in Jackson Heights neighbourhood of New York for eight years. He told me about his experiences during hurricane Sandy and

how the experiences were so similar between Bangladesh and New York in dealing with natural disasters like hurricanes and cyclones.

On reflection, I have three main impressions from the past week in New York.

Firstly, that the citizens from all over the world, with demonstrations in over two hundred cities around the world and with over 300,000 in New York, it was a truly global coming together on the need to take climate change seriously. I was also struck by the similarities between people from both rich and poor countries.

Secondly, the heads of government who gave speeches at the official Climate Summit all recognised this demand for positive actions and responded, at least rhetorically. They will need to channel their rhetoric into the climate change negotiations under the UNFCCC where countries will meet in Lima, Peru in December this year and prepare a new global treaty in Paris, France, in December 2015.

Thirdly the momentum for the global investment community to start the ball rolling on divestment from fossil fuel based companies and invest in clean energy companies has started to roll and will gain momentum in time.

So I think that we may have achieved a turning point this week in New York and around the world in accepting the magnitude of the climate change problem and also how to link bottom up efforts from all citizens with top down decisions by heads of government. The proof of the pudding will be seen in Paris in December 2015.

The writer is Senior Fellow at the London based International Institute for Environment and development (www.iied.org) and Director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (www.icccad.net) in Bangladesh.

Australia's stand on terrorism and foreign fighters

GREG WILCOCK

A column in these pages on September 24 asserted that Australia's proposed counter-terrorism legislation is 'anti-Muslim'.

That is wrong. Let's be clear: the Australian government is acting to disrupt a growing terrorist threat so Australians of all backgrounds remain free to go about their lives in safety.

ISIL and similar terrorist organisations have plainly, violently and repeatedly demonstrated the international danger they pose. Earlier this week ISIL leaders called on supporters to kill people in a number of countries including Australia.

This incitement echoes statements by such groups going back years. It underlines their enduring hostility to our values: values shared by much of the international community, and embraced by millions of migrants to Australia from dozens of countries for generations.

The difference we see in ISIL is the growing threat its foreign fighters pose to their countries of origin. About 80 nations have citizens fighting with ISIL. We assess that about 60 Australians are on the ground fighting in Iraq and Syria and about 100 more are providing funding and facilitation.

We must face this threat squarely alongside other countries facing the same threat. As the gathering international response of ISIL demonstrates, many countries have come to the judgment that we are in this together. This is certainly Australia's view.

The Australian government's proposed counter-terrorism legislation will better enable us to prevent and disrupt terrorist

threats, by creating a new offence of entering or remaining in, without a legitimate purpose, a declared area overseas where listed terrorist organisations are engaging in hostile activities.

This new measure would not prevent a person from travelling to a declared area for a legitimate purpose. Legitimate purposes include providing humanitarian aid, performing official government work as a professional journalist, and appearing before a court.

Nor would this new measure, as some suggest, reverse the onus of proof. Rather, it would create a new offence for a person to intentionally enter a declared area without good reason. Guilt for this offence would not be presumed. It would be for the prosecution to disprove any evidence of legitimate purposes.

This work is not about targeting any one community. It's not about religion, it's not about what people wear -- it's about dealing with a criminal threat.

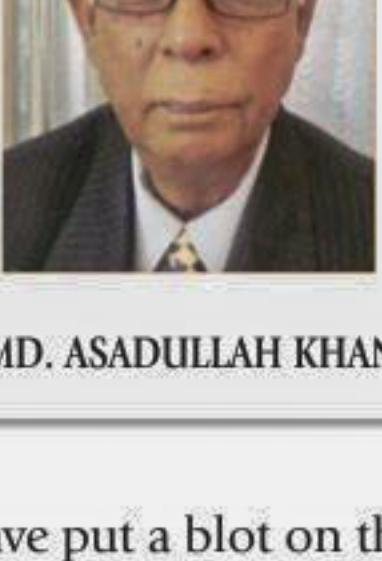
As we move forward with new legislation, we also recognise that the strongest defence against violent extremism lies within the Australian community itself. The Australian government will do all it can to support leaders in the community to play a critical role in turning people away from violent extremism.

The great majority of Australians see themselves as committed members of Australia's successful, forward-looking multicultural society. That being who we are -- and like nations taking a common stand against terrorism -- the great majority of Australians see that we are in this together.

The writer is Australian High Commissioner to Bangladesh.

Surging crime and rule of corruption

BITTER TRUTH



MD. ASADULLAH KHAN

Violence, crime and corruption of all types are searing the land. Coming up with increasing frequency, grisly incidents of killing, abduction, rape, ransom

have put a blot on the image of the country. On the other hand our political leaders are parading themselves before the media saying little relevant but much incendiary.

A Bangla daily editorialised on September 3 last that in the first six months in the current year, 2,263 murders were committed in the country. Let me cite some gory incidents that stunned the whole nation: On September 19, Zahirul Islam's (22) dead body shredded into six pieces was recovered from near a septic tank in Singair upazila of Manikganj. The grisly killing of two auto-rickshaw drivers, Abu Hanifa at Gouripur and Monir Hossain at Gazipur after snatching their vehicles in the second week of September, as reported in the dailies on September 19 last are such brazen acts of greed, cruelty and barbarism. Kalikoir businessman Shamsul Huq's dead body floating in Goalai river was recovered near Fulbaria. Reports of such macabre crimes are not only ominous but a chilling symbol of the breakdown of law and order.

Swapna, a nine year old minor girl, was raped and killed by two youngsters Jacky and Rana while she was going to her relation's house.

Locals nabbed Jacky and handed him over to police but Rana made his escape.

Extortionists in the past week at Rampura area in the city snatched Tk. 17 lakh from a money exchanger, shooting his son dead on the spot and the father grievously injured close to Rampura thana. It won't be enough to describe the situation in the country as just sickening.

The whole country is being held hostage in the hands of a limited number of criminals. Fed up with increasing incidence of hijacking, extortion, robbery, looting and even raping of minor girls that brought no response from the law enforcement agencies, people at large and

in some cases, victims themselves, out of pent up anger took law into their own hands.

There is no denying that the present crisis and disorder in the society stem from lack of political leadership and a moral vacuum. If the highest executives in the government, the secretaries in the ministries, can resort to fraudulent means for taking freedom fighter's certificates for getting extension in service without ever participating in the freedom struggle, what ethical standard and morality can we expect from the common man? The prolonged inaction of the executive on all such issues by treating the enforcement agencies as poodles of

their political masters further tainted the administration.

Disgust, or more appropriately hatred, was probably the overwhelming feeling in the past months because of the sickening news of scams being unearthed with each passing day. Shocking lapses of the concerned agencies and unforgivable bad governance now see Bangladesh sliding into distress zone, causing heavy losses, hitting development targets and resulting in deaths, diseases and lost image.

Rhetoric can't fill the stomach. What the average people care about is governance, the sort of governance that would make a real difference to their life. Successive governments

decay, financial scam, political stagnation, accumulation of wealth in some unscrupulous hands, adulteration of foodstuffs, and politicisation of the administration. The present government, it seems, will walk out not like heroes in the cause of the people, but like one betrayed, not by the people but by its partners and sycophants.

Things could get better if the government understood the importance of good governance, if in their speeches in meetings, and before the media, they had articulated exactly what they had planned to do about the things that went wrong. Instead, what we got were polemics and platitudes and political alliances with parties of diverse ideologies shamefully crafted into a marriage of convenience, regardless of their inglorious records during the Liberation War.

But undeniably true, there was and there is stability in the chair, but there are no stirrings of change in the country. Despite the PM being in permanent national focus, there seems to be hardly any agenda, or any vision and or action other than promises, and if there is any agenda or vision, there is hardly any strong initiative to implement that mission. The only promise or agenda that is being realised is a chance for exploiters, extortionists and corrupt officials and political masters to have a field day. The PM must be knowning about what is going on but she appears incapable of taking action against officials and the closest associates of the ruling alliance who are so openly insubordinate and brazenly corrupt.

The writer is a columnist of *The Daily Star*. E-mail: aukhandk@gmail.com

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were unable to provide this and the trend, unfortunately, still continues, with ominous consequences for the nation and the ruling party.

Corruption is inevitable in a system that disallows sacking of officials or booking the culprits with an iron hand.

This should be a moment of national catharsis. The January 5 election did not give the present ruling party the required mandate to rule the country with total consensus. Democratic spirit and values have given way to authoritarianism. Just within 9 months after the take over, the government is facing enormous challenges on all fronts: unbridled crime and corruption, moral

decay, financial scam, political stagnation, accumulation of wealth in some unscrupulous hands, adulteration of foodstuffs, and politicisation of the administration. The present government, it seems, will walk out not like heroes in the cause of the people, but like one betrayed, not by the people but by its partners and sycophants.

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CROSSWORD by Thomas Joseph

ACROSS

- 1 Stroked
- 7 Cote cries
- 11 Sigh, say
- 12 Pay to play
- 13 Like flypaper
- 14 Entralled
- 15 Arduous journeys
- 16 Sire
- 17 Clumsy ones
- 18 Ranch pen
- 19 Ibsen's home
- 21 Great serve
- 22 "I have no idea!"
- 25 Orchestra's place
- 26 Wild about
- 27 Copter parts
- 29 Risqué
- 30 Golf bag group
- 34 Paris subway
- 35 Newborn's need
- 36 Got on the horn
- 37 Fed
- 38 Decorative
- 39 Dune makeup
- 40 Fez feature

DOWN

- 1 Trattoria sauce
- 2 Superfluous
- 3 Shoplifter, e.g.
- 4 Append
- 5 Fraternal group
- 6 Susan of "L.A. Law"
- 7 Wearing less
- 8 Servant for taverns, e.g.
- 9 Tranquil
- 10 Reach an agreement
- 16 Increase
- 18 Big families
- 20 Roils
- 22 Museum display
- 23 Footrest
- 24 Soul brothers?
- 25 Darkroom output
- 28 Without letup
- 30 Travel aid
- 31 Minotaur's home
- 32 Alpine trill
- 34 Sorvino of "Mimic"
- 36 Period



CRYPTOQUOTE

UZMH QN QH UMD JMHD UZB QSLPSHPA HPJZSBCBXV..... UBTCA HZPV ZMLP HL DZBUD DHMYYQSX YTWWPY DKTPME HBVD? -ABTXCMD JBTOCMSA

Yesterday's CRYPTOQUOTE:
THERE IS NO FUTURE IN ANY JOB. THE FUTURE LIES IN THE MAN WHO HOLDS THE JOB. - GEORGE CRANE

Yesterday's answer



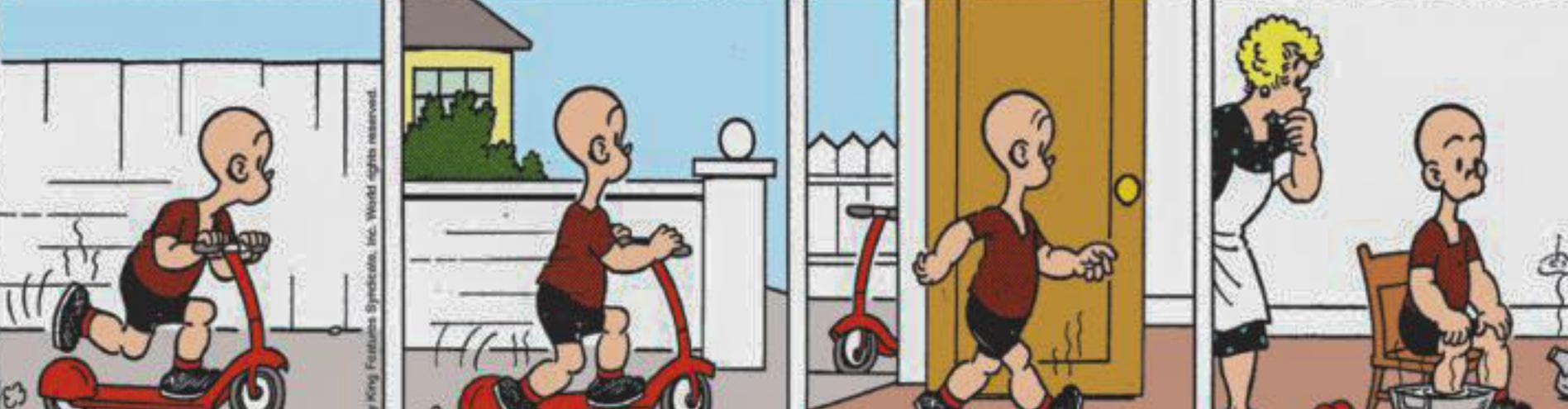
AXYDBAAXR is LONGFELLOW

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



HENRY



by Mort Walker



by Don Trachte

