

Anticipated frolic and festivity in city corporation polls

In passing, as a metaphor to this festive radiance one cannot help refer to the candidate who had romped on a horse carriage with his supporters to submit his nomination papers only to be told off as he had flouted the rules.



PARDON me, if this reads like a gossip column. For, this is no grapevine stuff, if you should look at it up close. American journalist Liz Smith once said, 'Bad gossip drives out good gossip.' No one contests her insightful observation. But it evokes an immediate reaction that the converse is equally true viz. good gossip drives out bad gossip. This is exactly what's

In the worst case scenario, the nomination business of auctioneering to the highest bidder has been a phenomenon by itself, part and parcel of the electoral culture.

The Election Commission may argue that they have prescribed high fees for nomination papers to restrict the onrush of entrants to the race; but isn't it in conflict with the democratic principle of equal opportunity? A City corporation poll, or for that matter, any election is not for a person of even modest plus solvency, howsoever honest, competent and visionary an aspirant he or she might be.

The rejection of BNP-backed Abdul Awal Minto's nomination papers was on a point of technicality that was easily avoidable. Why were

his nomination papers submitted by a non-voter in the constituency that he intended to contest for? His son Tabith Awal, however, has filed nomination papers, supposedly as a fall back candidate. But would he be as strong a candidate as his father—against AL-blessed Anisul Haque? Some observers tend to link this to a dynastic-familial bonding between Minto and an AL high up, which perhaps may not be to the liking of the BNP camp. For a public figure, nothing can and should be hidden from the public eye; that is the way politics in many countries pan out.

Apparently, levers are placed in the hands of the administration to influence the shape of nominations from the opposition by way of what they might see as legal recourse taken. At the same time, the AL-led alliance seems eager to ensure good contests from the BNP-led alliance aimed to gaining credence to the electoral process, electoral tactics and vote dividing strategy notwithstanding.

To elaborate on the first point, 42 mayoral candidates have been accepted from north and south corporation of Dhaka while 12 from Chittagong with the caveat that there are cases against 12 mayoral candidates, let alone those against 69 aspirants for the councilor's post. An EC's spokesman has endorsed police assertion that cops need no permission to arrest anyone 'accused of crime'. Setting some candidates on bail will test the accommodative spirit on the part of the AL.

On the second point which radiates a positive approach, when nomination papers of Mirza Abbas were taken up for consideration, the EC official asked for the opinion of the representative from the law enforcement agencies. The latter said that a case against Abbas is still hanging. The EC representative then enquired if there was a court order declaring him a fugitive to which the police official replied in the negative. On hearing this, the EC okayed the candidature of Mirza Abbas.

The BNP, to borrow the words of an American thinker, 'is not retreating but advancing in another direction.' And, even though its movement is railroaded, BNP seems to be 'backing into the limelight', to use a picturesque phrase.

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happening in the animated run-up to the forthcoming three city corporation elections in Dhaka and Chittagong metropolises. The nice thing is condiments are being added to our daily diet of imposed boredom. With frightful forebodings yielding place to positive vibrations from electoral drum-beating by enthusiastic town criers, a new zest has dawned in our daily grind.

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Sometimes bits and pieces of a major developing story can be more eloquent than a well-worded report or a narrative centering on it. Take the instance of lawyer Younus Akhand. He filed a writ with the High Court pleading for a stay order on the city corporation poll schedules altogether. Why? Because he was indignant over the high price of Tk one lakh tagged to obtaining nomination papers for the city corporation polls. There is a ringing message to his effort underscoring the fact that the city corporation polls have to begin with that kind of money. And, it is money all the way forward: the declaratory statements of accounts showing spouses having a wealth a few notches higher compared to that of the principal candidates may cast doubt over the veracity of the statements. The stipulated ceilings of expenditure are more likely to be exceeded than complied with.

Justice Murshed: In Memoriam

KAZI SALAHUDDIN

SYED Mahub Murshed is undoubtedly one of the most striking and impressive public figures that have ever appeared in our national scene. Many describe him as the torch-bearer of his uncle Sher-e-Bangla Fazlul Haque. Born in early 1911 in a distinguished Muslim family of Bengal, he had shown signs of his talented abilities at an early age. The late playwright and litterateur Nurul Momen, recalls in his essay "The Precocity," a youthful Murshed in their Presidency College days in Calcutta. The great expectations Murshed aroused in his contemporaries during his student days were subsequently materialised.

After a brilliant academic career, both in the Subcontinent and England, Syed Mahub Murshed began his career as a lawyer in 1939 and soon made his mark in the Calcutta Bar and High Court. His attachment to the Bar and to the members of the legal profession lasted till the end of his days. While serving at the bench, he would speak nostalgically of the Bar. The Bar, Murshed stated, "is my professional home a place to which I shall continually return; even when I am dead, my disembodied soul shall hover around the precincts of the Bar." His affection for people of his profession was deep. After his somewhat premature retirement or more correctly resignation he wrote, "I salute you - you who are my erstwhile comrades, the members of the Bar."

In spite of his professional preoccupations, Syed Mahub Murshed found time to write and publically speak with brilliance and also to participate in social, cultural and humanitarian activities. His

article "Quo Vadis Quaid-e-Azam" criticised the policies of Mohammed Ali Jinnah when it appeared in the 'Statesman' at Calcutta and 'Telegraph' at London 1942. During the famine of 1943 and later during the communal riots of 1946, Murshed worked actively with the Anjuman Mofidul Islam. He was one of the men who were primarily responsible for setting into motion the process that culminated in the Liakat-Nehru pact after the communal violence that shook the Sub-Continent. Murshed was drawn to the vortex of the language movement in the early fifties.

In the later part of 1954, he was elevated to the bench of the Dhaka High Court. As a judge, Syed Mahub Murshed remained committed to his lifelong ideals of liberty, justice and excellence. His judicial pronouncements, delivered while sitting in the bench of the Dhaka High Court and the Supreme Court of Pakistan where he served as an ad-hoc judge, then as Chief Justice, reflected these ideals. Some of Murshed's judgements created constitutional history and were landmarks which won for him international acclaim.

In addition to his monumental work on constitutional law in the judiciary, Murshed's championing of cultural freedom especially during the repressive Ayub regime will be always remembered. In 1961 he organised the Tagore centennial celebrations in Dhaka and other parts of Bangladesh, in defiance of the opposition of the then Pakistani military rulers. Deep down, Murshed was a Sufi and a liberal Muslim and preached tolerance which was against any form of communalism.

Another significant contribution by Chief Justice Murshed was that he gave

the final varnish to the drafting of the six points that was the demand of the then Bengali intelligentsia of all walks of life for provisional autonomy, which Sheikh Mujib fought for and was jailed for. It was Justice Murshed, as a practicing lawyer in early 1954, who was among those who drafted the 21-point manifesto of the Jukta-Front government and this was summarised by him into the famous six points. Again, Mazharul Haq Baki, the Chhatra League President in later 1966, records that no one except Chief Justice Murshed dared to accept being the chief guest at their annual conference, where Murshed like Sheikh Mujib made the clarion call for provincial autonomy for

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East Pakistan. During the roundtable conference in 1969, and when Ayub was virtually surrendering to the opposition and additionally, with the dissolution of the one unit in West Pakistan, Justice Murshed demanded 'one man, one vote.' Prior to this new demand, there was parity of 150 seats each for East and West Pakistan in the then Pakistan National Assembly. However with the breaking of the one unit in West Pakistan, Justice



Syed Mahub Murshed

Murshed's proposal was accepted, the one man, one vote concept resulted in 169 seats for East Pakistan out of 300 seats. In other words, it was Justice Murshed, who paved the way, as whoever would hold the majority in East Pakistan would obviously form the national government.

Justice Murshed's significant role during the mass upsurge in late 1968-69 is also on record. After Ayub Khan's ouster as president of Pakistan, the general public expected Murshed to run for the presidential office before Yahya usurped the post. Justice Murshed thus played an important role in shaping the Bangladeshi nationalism. To quote Dr. Mizanur Rahman Shelly, in his lifetime Murshed always endeavoured in "building bridges between the past, present and future." He will always remain the keeper of our national conscience.

The writer is the founder secretary of the Syed Mahub Murshed Memorial Committee and a poet who retired as an employee of Radio Bangladesh.

Big Brother is Swatching You

HUMOROUSLY YOURS



NAVEED MAHBUB

THERE is such a thing as karma. Rohit Sharma, I'm afraid this time it is NOT a no ball. And Umpires, I know you guys tried your level best, but the elite TSA (Transportation Security Administration) from New York's Kennedy Airport are reviewing the action

replays through X-rays. There are a record number of supporters for Australia at the semi final against India - 23 million Australians and 160 million Bangladeshis, the latter fresh from the pain of the plethora of '50-50 calls' in the quarter final. Bangladeshis pray so hard for the Aussies that the surplus prayers spill over into the finals as the Golds beat the Black Caps in a game where curling seems like a more exciting sport. To do justice, the commentators make sure they sound like those from the Buick Open (Golf).

It is the same MCG, perhaps with the same sea of brown at the stands, like a UPS convention, "What can Brown do for you?" And this is what the brown does - the Indian and Bangladeshi fans discard their blue and green jerseys respectively and blend into the colors of gold and black, depending on where they got their permanent residencies.

Perhaps the most exciting part of the final is when Mr Mustafa Kamal watches (not from the stands) as Mr Srinivasan swatches the ICC President to give away the trophy. Well, the Chairman surely knows how to make headlines for not necessarily the best reasons and stir up controversy even by doing 'nothing', like calling an 'informal' ICC board meeting.

Here I picture Arnold Swarzenegger, the Terminator, saying in a thick accent: "I'll be back!" and now with a sequel with Mr Srinivasan, the Substitutor, saying in a staccato accent: "I'll be back (to give the Trophy)!"

A case of Srinivasan vs. Kamal? Quite the contrary. The former couldn't help but thank the latter for saying: "I can't represent Indian Cricket Council." Oh, man! You just blew the chances of Aleem Dar being awarded the Padma Bhushan. But Mr. Kamal makes it a slam dunk for Mr. Srinivasan to snub the ICC constitution and take the center stage on the MCG field. Oh who cares that the spectators, 70% of them Indians, boo Srinivasan for being on the field despite his IPL and BCCI episodes. He probably takes the jeer as the long breathing-in before the long breathing-out to cheer Sachin. It's really all a matter of interpretation, as Mr Kamal does his own by taking the boos for him not being there to hand out the trophy, though I wonder how many Indians in the crowd even know of a President in the shadows of the big boys.

But Mr. Kamal may have a hint of truth and pays the price for speaking it out loud. It's like the CEO of an MNC being reprimanded or even shown the door for criticizing his own company in public about the truth on Corporate Apartheid where the same job has different salaries for expats vs. locals (white skin premium, brown skin discount). But the fact remains that one CAN make a much more effective difference through un-emotional, careful and objective rhetoric and actions from WITHIN the institution (a non-incumbent political party in town may have realized that). Quitting and then being vocal outside isn't as effective, unless you're doing the latter through stand-up comedy. Mr. Kamal does both, consciously and inadvertently.

Let's see what pans out in Dubai. For now, the ICC remains a typical family business trying to look like a blue chip company by engaging a few executives from the outside while keeping the reins within the family.

And Mr. Kamal, all said and done, I say kudos! That's what is called having the spunk, not so much as in the Tigers playing in Pakistan, where one can have a blast (yes, pun intended), only as long as one can last...

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

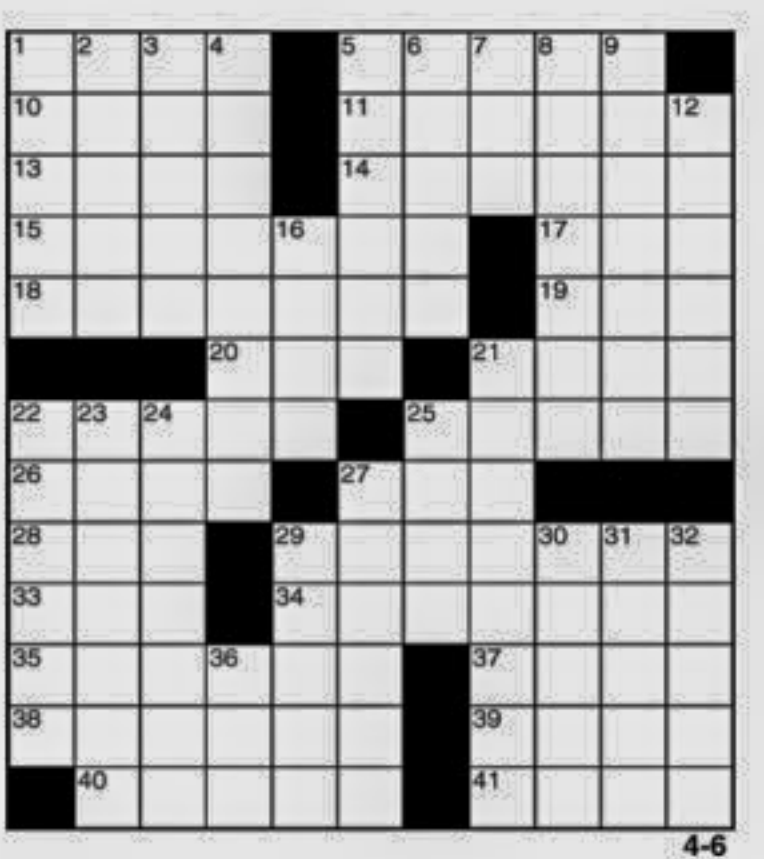
QUOTABLE Quote

A good head and a good heart are always a formidable combination.

Nelson Mandela

CROSSWORD by Thomas Joseph

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| ACROSS | DOWN |
| 1 Metal sources | 1 44th president |
| 5 Bkokes | 2 Arrested |
| 10 Ali- | 3 Dark wook |
| 11 Lounged around | 4 Leveee items |
| 13 Shortly, in poems | 5 Composer Debussy |
| 14 Charm | 5 Christmas plant |
| 15 Aware | 7 Maximum amount |
| 17 Karaoke singer's need, for short | 8 Pipe pro |
| 18 Whatever person | 9 Soap operas |
| 19 Sheep cry | 12 Century division |
| 20 Chopping tool | 16 Guileful |
| 21 Grasped | 21 Clutches |
| 22 Hard to pin down | 22 Library stamps |
| 25 Analyze grammar | 23 Egg dishes |
| 26 Writer Kingsley | 24 Calls |
| 27 Decimal system base | 25 Salon job |
| 28 Brewed beverage | 27 Some sculptures |
| 29 Joseph Conrad book | 29 Jousting weapon |
| 33 Building wing | 30 'Maleficent' star |
| 34 Radius or ulna | 31 Plain silly |
| 35 Lacquer ingredients | 32 Monument Valley sights |
| 37 Sighed word | 36 Here, to Henri |
| 38 Masonry finish | |
| 39 Gershon of "Bound" | |
| 40 Secret agents | |
| 41 Beholds | |



Yesterday's answer

FESTAL TARO
AROUSE OLIN
CONNIE WAND
EDGES WEDGE
TESS NORDIC
UPON INK
NOPARKING
CAR PASS
AMAZED ASIF
LITER TIARA
IBIS HEDGED
PINT INSANE
HAGS STONES

CRYPTOQUOTE

MWZ JZZJ YUZIO ODXWYJ EUMR ODZ SITTZF; MWTF JRRIT ODXWYJ EUMR ODZ CZIP. -- YXTQZUO P. VDZJOZUOMW

YESTERDAY'S CRYPTOQUOTE:

THE WORLD IS GOVERNED MORE BY APPEARANCE NECESSARY TO SEEM TO KNOW SOMETHING AS TO KNOWIT. -- DANIEL WEBSTER

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker



HENRY by Don Trachte



AXYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this example, 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.

HENRY'S SHOPPING CENTER

