

Breathing While Black

NAHELA NOWSHIN

A photograph was being widely shared on social media on the morning of April 27: a young man had his fist raised in the air as the police stood in formation while a store burned in the backdrop. "Baltimore unrest" were the words written in bold somewhere in the description of the photo. No, this isn't the 1968 Baltimore riot sparked by the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. This is the 2015 Baltimore uprising.

Freddie Gray, a 25-year-old African-American man, was taken into custody by the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) on April 12, 2015 for possession of a switchblade. By the time he arrived at the police station within half an hour, he was unable to talk or breathe. Several eyewitness accounts claimed that unnecessary use of force had been applied on Gray by the police while he was arrested. Gray suffered serious injuries to his larynx and spinal cord. He fell into a coma and died seven days later.

Spontaneous protests spread after his funeral and were soon marred with violence for reasons beyond what you'll see or hear on Fox News. The government's response was nothing extraordinary or unexpected. Curfews and a state of emergency were declared soon after. President Obama pointed out the "worrying interactions between black citizens and the police" -- a gross understatement. Although the President was quick to denounce the violence and looting amidst the protests, he, like many critics, failed to mention that the underlying causes of the uprising go much deeper than Freddie Gray's death. Gray's brutal treatment at the hands of the police is not an isolated incident. The disproportionate amount of force faced by African-Americans compared to their white counterparts is just one of many ways in which institutionalised racism in white America manifests itself.

Bottled up frustration within black communities because of centuries of alienation, discrimination and economic disenfranchisement may explain the climate of anger in Baltimore. Baltimore has a long history of police violence, particularly between the law enforcement and young men of colour. Police in Baltimore killed more unarmed people last year than 93 of the 100 largest US cities. BPD killed five black people and Maryland Transit Authority killed one Hispanic person -- no white person was killed. 100% of people killed by BPD last year were black. Consider this glaring fact: almost a quarter of Baltimore residents (64 percent blacks) live below the poverty line. A City Report study cited that the number of high poverty neighbourhoods -- which are often violent and environmentally hazardous -- in Baltimore shot up from 38 in 1970 to 55 in 2010. Federal, state and local policies catalysed the process of shunning black populations into slums, away from predominantly white middle-class suburbs. State-sanctioned policies of racial segregation of low-income minority families have exacerbated racial tensions in Baltimore.

A glimpse into the reactions of many in social media shows just how deep feelings of animosity run towards the black population in American society as a whole. Teana Walsh, an assistant prosecutor in Wayne County, Michigan, resigned on May 1st after she made a controversial comment on Facebook proposing a "solution" to deal with the violent wave of protests in Baltimore. The post reads: "Simple. Shoot em. Period. End of discussion. I don't care what causes the protesters to turn violent... what the 'they did it because' reason is ... no way is this acceptable. Flipping disgusting." Walsh's comment is reflective of a deep-rooted racist mentality that views black lives as expendable. Others on social media showed no



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hesitation in painting the uprisings with a wide brush, insensitively calling agitators and looters "lynch mobs", given white America's shameful history of lynching blacks. Here's where drawing the line between peaceful protesters and rioters becomes crucial.

Many continue to highlight the news media's convenient overlook when it comes to white people's sports-triggered riots. For example, after the Denver Broncos' Super Bowl win in 1998, 10,000 fans decided that an appropriate celebration would be to stir up fights in the streets, overturn cars and vandalise public property -- costing the city millions in damages. Just last year, San Francisco Giants fans' "celebrations" turned violent after the

Giants beat the Kansas City Royals to win the World Series. As rowdy crowds set debris on fire and smashed bottles on the streets, violence left three injured in separate incidents -- two of whom were injured by gunshots and the other by stabbing. During Hurricane Katrina, as people desperately searched for provisions for food, the media reported that white people "found" food while black people "looted" (Salon) since the latter are considered inherently "less civilised" and therefore "more savage" than the white-skinned.

Michael Brown. Tamir Rice. Trayvon Martin. Eric Garner. These are just a few names in a long list of unarmed black men killed by the police. These men have become symbols of a national

conversation about police brutality against men of colour. As Fox News, CNN and conservative pundits pander their viewers and try to steer the conversation away from police brutality and focus on the violence of the rioting instead, activist DeRay McKesson's words come to mind. McKesson, who has been at the frontline of the Black Lives Matter movement, shut down CNN's Wolf Blitzer when the latter tried to derail the conversation away from the larger issue of police brutality by saying, "You are suggesting this idea that broken windows are worse than broken spines... Freddie Gray will never be back. And those windows will be."

The writer is a journalist at The Daily Star.

A truncated deal is unacceptable

Dropping Assam from the Land Boundary Bill is a regressive decision by India

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

THE long-awaited Land Boundary Agreement (Constitutional Amendment) Bill is going to be tabled in the upper house of the Indian Parliament on May 5, 2015. But it is disappointing that Assam has been 'kept out for now' from the purview of the Bill. Even the Assam government is completely in dark about this sudden turn around. This one-sided move by the Indian central government contravenes the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) 1974 and the Land Boundary Protocol (LBP) 2011. Both the agreements stipulate Assam as an integral part of the Bangladesh-India border problem. There is no scope for partial fulfillment of the border treaties. After waiting for a long 41 years a truncated land boundary deal will only reinforce the anti-Indian politics in Bangladesh. It will have a dampening effect on the growing relations between the two neighbours.

BORDER ISSUES AT THE ASSAM AREA

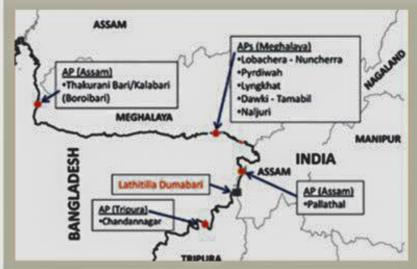
Assam shares a 262 km land boundary with Bangladesh. A stretch of around 2.5 km length of the border at the Lathitilla/Dumabari area of Assam had been disputed by both the countries. The LBP 2011 resolved the issue along the 'line drawn by Radcliff' and by taking into account the 'actual position on the ground'. Under this arrangement Assam will get 714 acres of land.

The issue of adverse possession has also been resolved by the 2011 Protocol. Bangladesh will get around 268.40 acres of the total adverse possessed land between Bangladesh and Assam. The Protocol concludes that the interests of tea and paan planters situated in this disputed area have been protected while finalising the border between India and Bangladesh in this sector.

Recently, Chief Minister of Assam Tarun Gogoi in a letter to PM Modi wrote: "It is seen as a result of the re-demarcation, approximately 714 acres of land area in Lathitilla area will formally become part of India (Assam) and an area of 193.85 acres of land in Boroibari and 74.55 acres of land in Pallathal area will formally belong to Bangladesh. Therefore, India

LAND SWAP STATS (Acres)

LOCATION	BANGLADESH
BOROIBARI	193.85
PALLATHAL TE	74.5
LALTHILLA-DUMABARI	268.4



SOURCE: THE DAILY STAR & TIMES OF INDIA

(Assam) will formally get a net land area of 445.6 acres with reference to the Radcliff Line."

Meticulous joint surveys on the ground by both the parties have established that the stipulated share of Bangladesh (268.4 acres) has been in de facto possession of the country since even before its creation.

In respect to these ground realities, a document of India External Affairs Ministry titled 'India & Bangladesh: Land Boundary Agreement' notes that "in reality the transferred area has already been in possession of Bangladesh and the handing over of these areas to Bangladesh is merely a procedural formal acceptance of a de facto reality on the ground. The same applies to Indian Adverse Possessions within Bangladesh that would be transferred to the Indian Union in implementation of the 2011 Protocol."

So, according to the LBP 2011 there are no outstanding border issues between Bangladesh and India.

WHAT STANDS IN THE WAY?

A PTI report states that Assam has been kept out of the Bill due to sensitivities in that state. What are they? Who is raking up such opposition against the LBA?

The All Assam Students Union (AASU), Assam Gono Parishad (AGP), BJP and their affiliated organisations have been opposing the LBA in Assam for a long time. In Congress-led UPA's tenure, though the LBP 2011 was signed, the agreement could not be ratified because of massive protests by these organisations. During the 2014 Lok Sabha campaign, Modi had announced at every rally in Assam that not an inch of the state's land would go to Bangladesh. It was one of the main election agendas flaunted by BJP in Assam. BJP gained seven out of 14 Lok Sabha seats in that poll. Now the Assam Assembly poll is due early next year and Assam BJP aspires to come to power. They do not want to face a backlash in the poll going against their own chauvinistic anti-Bangladeshi propaganda.

Since 1985, infiltration by Bangladeshis has been a key issue in Assam's politics. According to the Assam Accord, signed in 1985, immigrants from Bangladesh are not allowed to be deported from Assam. So, there is a fear among Assamese people of being marginalised to a minority by Bangladeshi infiltrators. BJP along with AGP and AASU have been playing on this latent anti-Bangladeshi sentiment held by a large section of Assamese people. By creating an emotive opposition to the imagined land transfer to Bangladesh they are only trying to reinforce their support base.

Due to such politicisation of the land boundary issue, a large section of Assamese people believe that all the land claimed by Bangladesh actually belongs to Assam. Hence ceding 268.4 acres of it to Bangladesh is absolutely unacceptable to them. But they fail to admit that Assam is getting the lion's share of

the disputed land and the ceded area is already in possession of Bangladesh; handing over the land to Bangladesh is merely a formal acceptance of a de facto reality on the ground.

WHY INCLUSION OF ASSAM IS SO IMPORTANT

The lack of clarity on the boundary between Bangladesh and India often causes tensions between the two countries and takes toll on the lives of the people living in these areas. The deadliest fight between the border forces took place in Boroibari (Assam) in 2001. In that firing incident 16 BSF personnel were killed. According to the Assam Chief Minister Gogoi, "The agreement, if ratified along with the clauses relating to Assam sector would not only lead to a permanent solution to the long standing India-Bangladesh border disputes in the Assam sector but also facilitate demarcation of undemarcated areas in Lathitilla-Dumabari." The boundary deal will enable both the countries to curb smuggling, illegal migration, and other criminal activities. But keeping out a part of the border undemarcated will only make it prone to increased criminal activities. It will ultimately thwart the whole border management plan.

The deal will create huge economic opportunities for both Bangladesh and Assam. Assam can be a big export market for Bangladesh. The landlocked Assam can also garner huge economic benefits by getting connected with Bangladesh. A settled boundary can also revive the moribund South Asia Growth Quadrangle (SAGQ), comprising India's north east, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan.

THE WAY FORWARD

After getting elected to office, Indian Prime Minister Modi had said that while the deal may result in short-term losses the country will gain in the long term and Assam's interest will be protected. We urge the Indian PM to hold on to this spirit, assuage the baseless anti-Bangladeshi sentiments in Assam and include Assam in the Land Boundary Agreement Bill.

The writer is Sr. Editorial Assistant, The Daily Star. E-mail: sajen1986@gmail.com

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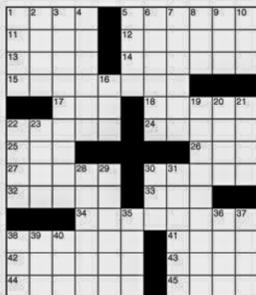
QUOTABLE Quote

We have to talk about liberating minds as well as liberating society.

Angela Davis

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| ACROSS | DOWN |
| 1 Puppy sounds | 1 Casual assent |
| 5 Said | 2 Car bar |
| 11 Way to go | 3 Set up the tents |
| 12 Puget Sound City | 4 Rodin creation |
| 13 Utah ski resort | 5 Rating unit |
| 14 Pretty good grade | 6 Circus stars |
| 15 Harassed | 7 Tart |
| 17 Paul Newman film | 8 Great weight |
| 18 Finely chopped | 9 Earth-bound bird |
| 22 Tied a corset | 10 "Kapital" |
| 24 Alarm | 16 Peculiar |
| 25 Imitating | 19 Get the sniffles |
| 26 Father's Day gift | 20 War of 1812 port |
| 27 Screen sirens | 21 Title paper |
| 30 Showed nervousness | 22 Kilauea flow |
| 32 Jellied dish | 23 Weary word |
| 33 "That's gross!" | 28 Free-booter |
| 34 Store security worker | 29 Play parts |
| 38 Demi Moore movie | 30 Place |
| 41 Aching | 31 Tennis star Andre |
| 42 Makes speeches | 35 Egg Setting |
| 43 Louver piece | 36 Vaccine type |
| 44 Least covered | 37 Singer Seeger |
| 45 Not busy | 38 Dollop |
| | 39 Radio's Glass |
| | 40 Mayo buy |



CRYPTOQUOTE
MQNMQQ TQPQ DOTDRA ESQ OWYWEQPA NL SDMMWI Q AA QGZQME LNP ESQ BQPR LQT ESDE TQPQ DA VNUU DA AMPWIV WEAQOL. - QPIQAE SQYWVTDTR

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: SHE TURNED TO THE SUNLIGHT; AND SHOOK HER YELLOW HEAD, AND WHISPERED TO HER NEIGHBOR: "WINTER IS DEAD." -- A.A. MILNE

Yesterday's answer



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



HENRY

by Don Trachte

