

Demographic dividends, Jinjira and vocational training

PLEASURE IS ALL MINE



SHAH HUSAIN IMAM

Such proverbial and historical lamentations bear a salutary message warning us against the bane of procrastination. Conversely, they proclaim the virtues of timely action and intervention. The crux of the matter is: Every opportunity, especially the best one, has a shelf-life, an expiry date. The Demographic Impact Study launched by the General Economics Division and the UN Population Fund last Monday urged the government and the private sector to "act fast to take advantage of the large youth population" by way of reaping demographic dividends. Bangladesh is already half way through its demographic dividend period. She is left with 16 years to be fully exploiting the potential manpower largesse of 15-59 years working age population peaking in 2032. Expansion of the young population means

HERE is an African proverb: "The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago." This sits in well with Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb pronouncing his life's lesson in his last days: "What you can do today, don't leave it for

a corresponding reduction in the number of dependents which is potential bonus to demographic dividend. The 'younging' of the population is a national asset depending upon how it is used. It may be developed, trained manpower that is employable and productive at home and abroad or politically charged self-serving factions with a finger on every pie or indeed listless drop-outs from the mainstream given to addiction, extremism and criminalities.

The job is cut out. We take stock of where we stand in terms of deriving the benefits of demographic dividend in 2015. From the lessons learnt, we move on to capitalising the 16-year window of opportunities until 2032. Unless we create employment opportunities to absorb a major portion of the 22 million new entrants to the job market every year, getting dividends from a growing young population will largely remain unfulfilled.

The stake is even greater when you consider the importance of maximising benefits of the first series of demographic dividends. For that would leave an older generation with savings and financial security to be passed on to their progeny. This is the second dividend in prospect provided we succeed with the first one.

Certain comments from keen observers of the unfolding of Bangladesh's future have given me a leap of the mind, and I do hope these will perk up your spirits as well. Here we go! An Indian corporate official was watching the third day's proceedings of our



second test match against Pakistan from the same complimentary box we happened to share by mere coincidence at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium. As Bangladesh struggled to chase a mammoth total, the whole array of their sweeping victories in ODI and T-20 series against Pakistan, let alone the brave, record-breaking performance in the gloriously drawn first test passed through the mind's eye.

Our Indian companion, himself a cricketer of some standing having represented Kerala in regional contests marveled at the improvement our national cricket team has

made in recent years, emphasising that it is one of the best ODI sides in the world today. Then he made this insightful remark, "The advantage with Bangladesh is that it has a large population with a vast reservoir of raw talents waiting to be honed into not just one but a few good sides in all formats of the game." See how the pacers have become strike bowlers, spinners are more attacking with guiles, the batting depth trolls down to the ninth. All we need is to keep up the momentum with investment and sustained exposure under a world class professional management regime.

We are actually reaping a demographic dividend in cricket.

My esteemed friend reputed economist Dr. Mohammad Farashuddin in his pre-budget article in this paper on May 24 underscored the need for human resource development for harnessing 50 million youths towards reaping demographic dividends. While doing so he made a very pertinent suggestion which I quote: "In particular, through an amicably negotiated arrangement the Quami madrasa stream students could be brought under vocational training at government expenses, keeping intact the existing core curricula. So trained Quami madrasa human resources would have ready accessibility in the Middle East job markets."

Some West African countries have taken crash programmes among 15-18 year old youngsters to create vocationally trained, large, technical cadres out of them. The new kids on the block will be the linchpin of the growth machine, as it were.

The Jinjira light engineering baseline thriving on knock-down technology and recycling of waste products holds a promise for youth employment if developed into a more dynamic hub. Japan after the Second World War took to technological improvisations by breaking down Western machineries. Eventually she would graduate on to the sophisticated engineering trajectory. Government and the private sector should try and put a shine to Jinjira's sheen.

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Smart development goals

FINN KYDLAND, BJORN LOMBERG, TOM SCHELLING and NANCY STOKEY

Y September, the world's 193 governments will meet in New York and agree on a set of ambitious, global targets for 2030. Over the next 15 years these targets will direct the \$2.5 trillion to be spent on development assistance, as well as countless trillions in national budgets.

Based on peer-reviewed analyses from 82 of the world's top economists and 44 sector experts organised by the Copenhagen Consensus, three of us – Finn, Tom and Nancy – have prioritised more than a hundred of the proposed targets in terms of their value-for-money. They are certainly not all equal. Some targets generate much higher economic, social and environmental benefits than others, per dollar spent.

The natural political inclination is to promise all good things to everyone, and the UN is currently poised to pick 169 well-intentioned

Consider a couple of targets that help people directly through health benefits. Tuberculosis (TB) is a 'hidden' disease. Over two billion people carry the bacterium that causes it, about 10% of those people will develop TB at some point, and about 1.5 million people each year die from TB. But treatment is inexpensive and, in most cases, highly effective. Spending a dollar on diagnosis and treatment is a low-cost way to give many more years of productive life to many people. Ebola may get the headlines, but TB is a much bigger problem.

Reducing childhood malnutrition is another excellent target. People of every age deserve to be well nourished, but nutrition is especially critical for young children. A good diet allows their brains and muscles to develop better, producing life-long benefits. Well-nourished children stay in school longer, learn more and end up being much more productive members of society. The available evidence suggests that providing better nutrition for 68 million children each year would produce over \$40 in long-term social benefits for every dollar spent.

There are excellent targets involving the planet as well. Governments around the world still subsidise the use of fossil fuels to the tune of over \$500bn each year. Cutting these subsidies would reduce pollution and free up resources for investments in health, education, and infrastructure. Protecting coral reefs turns out to be a surprisingly efficient target as well. There are benefits in terms of biodiversity, but healthy reefs also produce more tangible and immediate benefits. They increase fish stocks—benefitting both fishermen and consumers, and attract visitors who explore their beauties—benefitting everyone working in the tourist industry, as well as the tourists themselves.

Perhaps the most important, over-arching problem facing the world is poverty, which still afflicts billions of people. Poverty is the ultimate source of many other problems. Poor families have trouble providing their children with adequate food, education, and medical care. The immediate result is high rates of infant mortality, as well as poor cognitive skills and reduced productive capacity among surviving children. The ultimate result is a cycle of poverty.

Better nutrition and better schools will help alleviate poverty, but there is another target that promises to be even more effective: lowering barriers to international trade. The historical evidence on this point is compelling. In China, South Korea, India, Chile and many other countries, reducing trade restrictions has lifted incomes and reduced poverty, and triggered decades of rapid income growth. Poverty reduction was the first item in UN's list of Millennium Development Goals, and the numerical target was achieved. Why? Income growth in China was a big part of the story. And how did the Chinese achieve that remarkable feat? Most evidence suggests that international trade was a key ingredient. Trade produces immediate benefits by opening up markets, but it also facilitates the flow of ideas and technologies, producing even greater benefits over a longer horizon. A successful Doha free trade agreement could lift 160 million people out of extreme poverty.

Our list of targets will not solve all the world's problems, but neither can any list under realistic budgets. Our list can help the UN make its choices like a savvy shopper with limited funds. Choosing good targets will vastly increase the benefits to people around the world, as well as generations to come. Governments should forgo the instant gratification of promising everything to everyone, and instead focus on choosing smart development goals.

For more information on the project and all 19 targets, visit www.post2015consensus.com

The writers are Nobel Laureate and Professor, University of California, Santa Barbara; President of the Copenhagen Consensus Center; Nobel Laureate and Professor, University of Maryland, and Professor, University of Chicago, respectively.

- PEOPLE**
- Lower chronic child malnutrition by 40%
 - Halve malaria infection
 - Reduce tuberculosis deaths by 90%
 - Avoid 1.1 million HIV infections through circumcision
 - Cut early death from chronic diseases by 1/3
 - Reduce newborn mortality by 70%
 - Increase immunization to reduce child deaths by 25%
 - Make family planning available to everyone
 - Eliminate violence against women and girls
- PLANET**
- Phase out fossil fuel subsidies
 - Halve coral reef loss
 - Tax pollution damage from energy
 - Cut indoor air pollution by 20%
- PROSPERITY**
- Reduce trade restrictions (full Doha)
 - Improve gender equality in ownership, business and politics
 - Boost agricultural yield growth by 40%
 - Increase girls' education by 2 years
 - Achieve universal primary education in sub-Saharan Africa
 - Triple preschool in sub-Saharan Africa

targets. But the evidence at hand, although limited, indicates pretty clearly that some of these targets are much more promising than others. The analyses of the experts suggest that some of the targets are barely worthwhile, producing only a little more than \$1 in social benefits per dollar spent, while others produce much higher social returns.

We have selected the 19 targets that we expect to produce the greatest benefits. The expert analyses suggest that if the UN concentrates on these top 19 targets, it can get \$20 to \$40 in social benefits per dollar spent, while allocating it evenly across all 169 targets would reduce the figure to less than \$10. Being smart about spending could be better than doubling or quadrupling the aid budget. Our short list covers a lot of ground, but the thread that connects the individual targets is the benefits they will provide for people around the world in terms of health, the environment, and economic well-being, the three headings the UN has dubbed "people, planet and prosperity."

The bolden triangle

HUMOROUSLY YOURS



NAVEED MAHUB

WHEN expats come to Bangladesh, they cry twice – once when they arrive, and once when they leave. The same goes with the natives when they leave Bangladesh and more so, when they arrive on (near) foreign lands by sea. The tears are well worth it as the grass is always green on the other side of the blue.

I'm sure these thousands don't wake up one fine morning and decide to be slaves. It can't also be that they are getting an overdose of CNN and taking its motto 'Go beyond borders' a little too literally. It's just that seeing a fellow man, some see compassion, while some see profits for a sale on all body parts.

Some, not necessarily all strangers, are surely giving these Bangladeshis and Rohingya's the wrong idea of the Second Home programme in Malaysia, which seems to now be offering a Permanent Home – three feet under. Destination Malaysia, Truly Asia – from your first home to the second home and now the last home.

Let's be fair. Not all perish as search and rescue becomes search and return. All return to Bangladesh the same way they went – the Bangladeshis directly and the Rohingya's after going through Myanmar's one day express service of nationality verification.

Then there are the luckier ones who may return home on jet planes. Did I mention that they are LEGAL migrant workers in the Middle East? Thank you Malaysian company IRIS, the digital ISIS for our boys and girls in the desert, for the brilliant job you've done with machine readable passports. I guess one needs a bionic iris to read the fine prints of the IRIS contract. . .

Neighbouring Thailand also beckons with a warm Sawasdee – from Sukhumvit to Samitivej and now to Slaveville. Welcome to Amazing Thailand. Yes, it's a-maze-in-Thailand – a maze of abandoned camps.

Oh well, immigrants are never welcome by the older immigrants. I have to say, Malaysia and Thailand are doing a pretty good job as bouncers. In fact, the American Civil War may have been averted if the two Asian Coast Guards were deployed along America's Atlantic coast in order to drive away inbound slave ships.

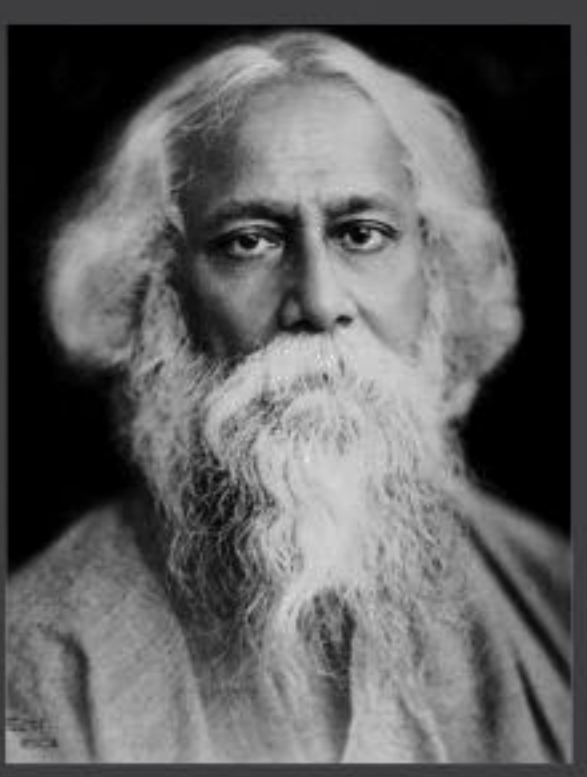
Sailing is a matter of timing. Christopher Columbus and Captain Cook took arms and were welcomed with open arms. Migrant workers pay an arm and a leg and take their open arms to work at a bargain and are being welcomed with arms. The ship to board-sail-land-stay has sailed – a sad pun. But prevention is the only cure for the human traffic jam.

So help, UN Human Rights Council. If not now, then maybe with a new leader at the helm in 2016, a position that is being actively sought after by Saudi Arabia. With its scorecard of just 85 beheadings this year, that'll be like Keith Richards heading a drug rehabilitation programme.

Looks like Bangladesh is on its own, taking a non-violent approach. We're Mahatma to Malaysia – providing visas on arrival while Bangladeshi boat migrants get mass graves on arrival into Malaysia. Oh and let's not forget us picking up Malaysian frozen parathas from air conditioned super markets while pooh-pooh-ing the cheap, fresh, hot ones being made right across the parking lot. Ok, so this 'foreign' (wow!) paratha is too tasty (not to me) to be boycotted. Then how about we do this – just like the high end stores proudly sporting the sign above the Bangladeshi mangoes: 'Chapai mangoes – formalin-free', display this sign on the freezers: 'Malaysian parathas – blood, torture and abuse free'...

The writer is an engineer at Ford & Qualcomm USA and CEO of IBM & Nokia Siemens Networks Bangladesh turned comedian (by choice), the host of NTV's The Naveed Mahub Show and the founder of Naveed's Comedy Club. E-mail: naveed@naveedmahub.com

QUOTABLE Quote

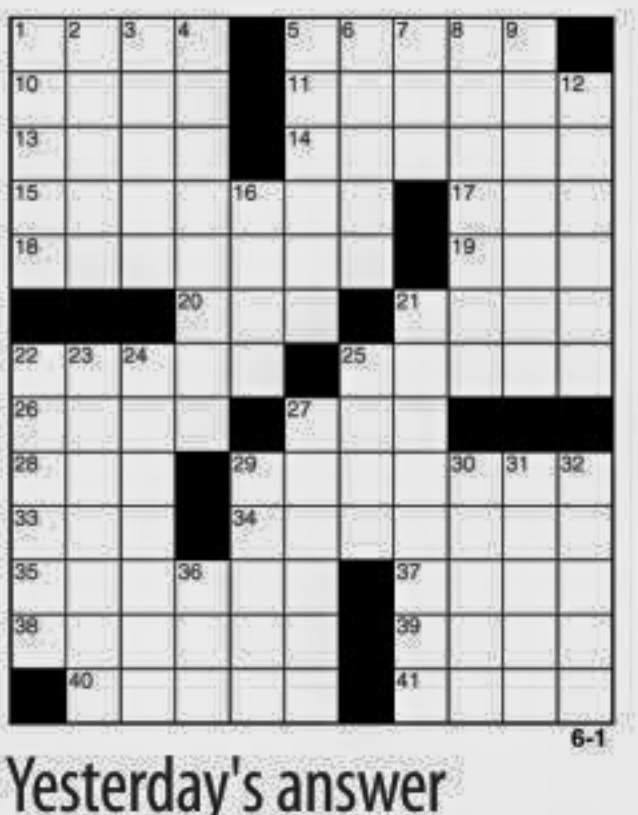


RABINDRANATH TAGORE (1861 - 1941)

"I SEEM TO HAVE LOVED YOU IN NUMBERLESS FORMS, NUMBERLESS TIMES, IN LIFE AFTER LIFE, IN AGE AFTER AGE FOREVER."

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- Front desk feature
 - Nation of West Africa
 - Wheel connection
 - On cloud nine
 - Ceiling support
 - Home run expert
 - Tall wardrobe
 - Poem of praise
 - Substitute
 - Central
 - Firewood unit
 - Singer k. d.
 - Reef material
 - Door part
 - Over again
 - Pop's wife
 - Cloth scrap
 - Odorous animal
 - Historic time
 - Ordinary
 - Comfort
 - Persia, today
 - Mini hamburger
 - Barracks beds
- DOWN**
- Diane and Cheryl
 - Leg bend
 - Rum cakes
 - Wield, as power
 - Andean animal
 - Car buyer's protection
 - Baseball great Lou
 - Visitor from space
 - Flying mammal
 - Footrest
 - Calling for
 - Search the riverbed
 - Fan's favorite
 - Five-line poem
 - Gentle touch
 - Doing well
 - Kingly finery
 - Golf target
 - Van workers
 - Showed nervousness
 - Leslie of "Gigi"
 - Quartz variety
 - Grammar topic
 - Tack on



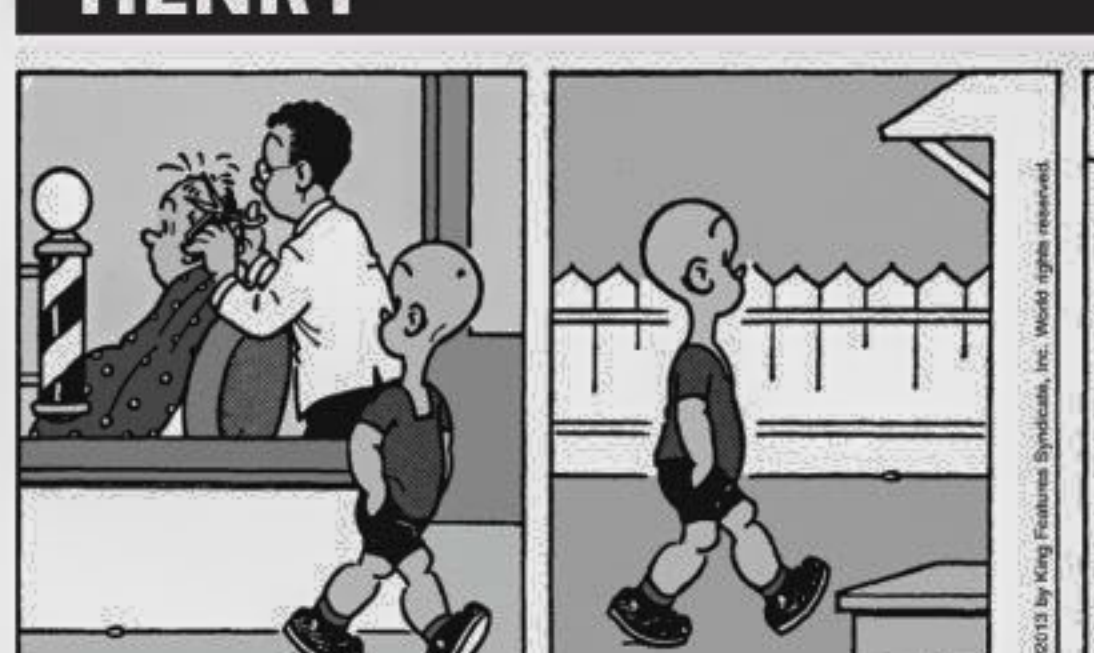
Yesterday's answer

SCOUTS MIST
CORNET ONCE
INADAY WARN
FITAS LEWIS
ICET AEROBE
EARN RED
DODOBIRDS
ZEN KONA
APPEAR TACT
GRAVY LABOR
RIPE NOTARY
EVEN ERASES
BERT DETEST

BEETLE BAILEY



LOOKS LIKE HE'S MAKING MORE NEW PLANS



HENRY



I THINK OUR FAVORITE BUSH NEEDS ANOTHER TRIM, HENRY!



by Mort Walker

by Don Trachte