

QUESTION PAPER LEAK

IT'S TIME TO OVERHAUL THE SYSTEM

QUESTION paper leak phenomena in Bangladesh are as old as the hills. We read or hear about such instances every single year. In light of the ongoing protests against the medical admission test question paper leak, it is worth pondering upon what this noxious practice means for the future of prospective students, the quality of students and professionals Bangladesh will produce in the coming years and the education system as a whole in the country.

There has been a staggering 64 allegations of question paper leaks in the last four years alone. It is a well-known fact that government employees, coaching centres, guidebook traders and students are part of a growing, profitable criminal network dedicated to leaking question papers. RAB has recently arrested seven people including three government doctors and a UGC assistant director for their involvement in the leaking of medical and dental admission question papers. And the collusion of public officials is hardly surprising.

Many questions, therefore, arise: How does this affect the image of public educational institutions since some of the highest authorities function as the instrumental organs in this shady business? When the "guardians" of public colleges, who are supposed to ensure that exams are conducted in a fair and transparent manner, cash in on the art of cheating, what message does that send to the coming generations? What does this mean for the quality of future doctors and public professionals we will churn out?

Students don't mind buying off exam papers if that means they'll get into the medical and/or public school of their choice. But with the public education system already in a shambles, such malpractices serve to demean the value of education and damage the prospects and morale of hardworking, meritorious students. Question paper leaks marginalise bright students, especially those who cannot afford alternatives such as foreign education, and degrade the quality of the future crop of professionals and leaders. With the window of opportunity that is the demographic dividend, youths, from an early age, are getting into the toxic habit of memorising answers from leaked question papers ahead of examinations. With a growing pool of graduates and increasing demand for



employees in particular being incriminated in such cases without fail, TIB's claim that question papers cannot successfully be leaked without the collaboration of public officials -- including those of the Primary Education Directorate, Education Boards and Bangladesh Government Press -- remains valid. The Education Ministry's constant denial, in this regard, is baffling. Claiming to simply having "taken action" is not satisfactory. Pre-emptive measures are necessary to prevent question papers from leaking in the first place. But such crime control measures, i.e. exposing these rackets, address only a minor aspect of a much bigger problem.

The fact that students can pass exams with flying colours with the help of leaked question papers points towards a glaring hole in these public examinations themselves. If they truly did test students' critical thinking skills, I doubt it would be this easy to simply rely on memorisation skills. It would be much more challenging to resort to leaked test papers that assess one's creative skills and that prompt one to think on his or her feet. For instance, with standardised tests such as the GRE, examinees are given different questions which largely eliminate their chances of passing the test by memorising answers if the test papers were to leak. Although reforming public examinations in Bangladesh is in no way an easy feat, there's a lot that the Education Ministry can take away from such globally practiced standardised tests. Higher authorities, therefore, ought to understand that the current system of public examinations simply isn't up to par. Much more needs to be done than to simply quash criminal rackets, and it's time we think about overhauling the public examination system.

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higher education, what we're doing is paving the pathway for all students -- regardless of merit -- to resort to cheating and essentially teaching them that hard labour bears no fruit. With a top-down culture of impunity (evident by the frequency of question paper leaks) students are fast losing faith in the public education management system. In addition, the brutal treatment of student protesters at the hands of law enforcers is catalysing the dissipation of students' overall confidence.

It is worth contemplating as to why more isn't being done to strengthen online monitoring since social media is the primary platform of leaked question/answer sharing. With laws like the ICT Act geared towards surveilling the blogosphere and sites such as Facebook and Twitter, why is it

that culprits responsible for leaking questions online are roaming free instead of being apprehended? It seems like the online police are only concerned about incarcerating those guilty of spouting offensive speech. Are the other crimes taking place within the online space not worth investigating? It is incomprehensible as to why despite such incidents having become commonplace, there is no mechanism in place designed to detect question paper leaks on the internet and identify the offenders who are making big bucks out of this immoral enterprise.

POSTPONEMENT OF AUSTRALIAN CRICKET TEAM'S TOUR Perplexing choice about security

MD. RIZWANUL ISLAM

THE postponement of the Australian national cricket team's tour to Bangladesh has dealt a blow to the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and the security apparatus of the Government of Bangladesh. Apparently, all the assurances and proposed security arrangements of the BCB and security agencies in Bangladesh could not persuade Cricket Australia (CA) regarding the safety of the Australian cricketers. If we take note of the political situation, which often escalates security concerns in this country, things have been distinctly quiet in the recent past. The International Cricket Council World Twenty20, a much more important sporting event than CA's tour, took place from March to April 2014 in the country, following a national parliamentary election in Bangladesh which was anything but peaceful. Clearly, concerns about security in Bangladesh was much more intense at that time than it is now. The postponement of the Australian team's tour has also dealt a severe blow to the millions of cricket enthusiasts of this country who are among the keenest of cricket fans in the world.

However, in my view, the unfortunate postponement has raised some very critical questions about the global threat of terrorism and the perception of security which permeates well beyond the security situation in Bangladesh. The way the threat of terrorism has mushroomed across the globe has made it almost impossible to determine which would be the next place that terrorists would target. In fact, there is hardly any part of the globe that can claim to be immune from the threat of deadly terrorist attacks.

Generally, economically backward states have been perceived to be in disproportionately greater danger of imminent terrorist attacks. Given the lack of resources,

and problems with governance and administration, such a perception is hardly surprising. However, if we take note of the major terror incidents in the recent past, we may surprisingly find that often economically advanced countries with sophisticated technologies and advanced security

suffered a string of lethal attacks in its London's Metrorail network in July 2005. In November 2008, following a terror attack in Mumbai, that took the lives of many innocent civilians, the touring English national cricket team went back to their own country but they returned to play against India within a couple of weeks. It was not

many lives were lost in the events following the siege. However, this had no bearing on the New Year test match between Australia and India on the Sydney Cricket Ground just a few weeks following the incident, nor did it have any visible impact on any of the World Cup matches held in Sydney or other cricket grounds in Australia, from February to March 2015. In fact, none of these above mentioned attacks has made any of these countries or their respective cities to be considered as unsafe to host major sporting events, sometimes even in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks.

Clearly, whether or not a country would send its sportsmen to another country is a choice to be made by the sports administrators on the basis of assessments made by the security apparatus of the respective government. And that choice would be made on the basis of secret data only accessible to the officials. We, the public, have nothing to do with such information or the choice made based on them. And all nations would naturally tend to be protective of its leading athletes. However, seemingly inconsistent choices or decisions made on seemingly fragile or remote threats would naturally lead to a sense of confusion amidst ordinary people who are bound to feel snubbed.

Even if the security tip-offs had been the same, it is quite improbable that CA could dare to react to India in the way they have reacted to Bangladesh. So, it would clearly seem that a country being economically poor would be deemed to be inherently unreliable as a safe host, even if there is no demonstrated basis for drawing such a conclusion. Another problem with 'oversensitivity' regarding security issues is that any over-sensitive reaction about not so distinct threats probably plays into the hands of the terrorists who want to create a division among the human race, the members of whom are created alike by nature.

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Cancellation of the test tour by Cricket Australia has naturally made Bangladesh fans upset, especially after the successful hosting of the World T20.

intelligence systems at their disposal, have been hit by very brutal terror attacks.

The USA, which is economically and strategically the most advanced country at the moment, has been tormented and traumatised by the unprecedented attack of September 2011. One of USA's closest allies, the United Kingdom, has

just the sublime century of Sachin Tendulkar, but the gesture of the English team which was appreciated by Indian cricket enthusiasts. If we go back to the 20th century, we would find that in 1972, a terrorist attack in Munich Olympic village killed several athletes. A terrorist in a Sydney Café last year held innocent customers hostage and

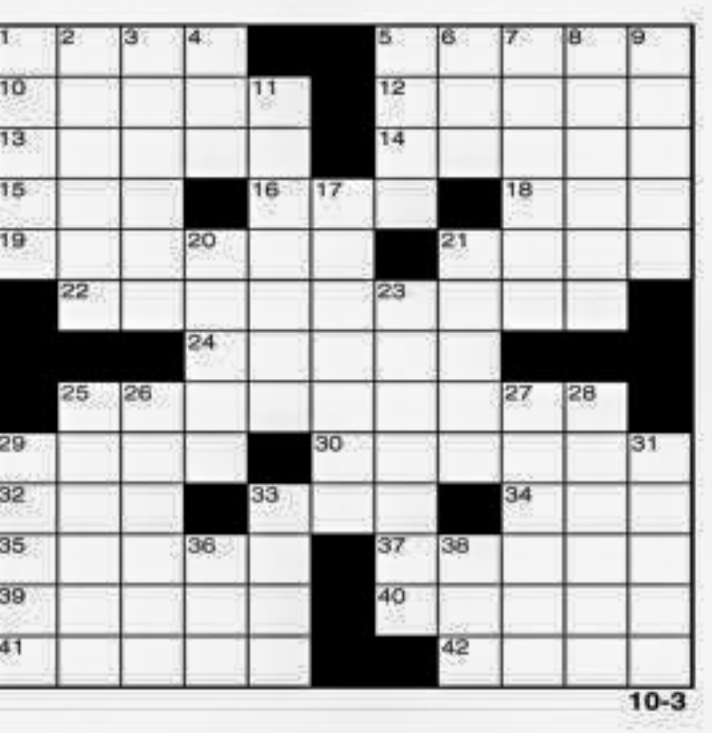
QUOTABLE Quote



BELL HOOKS American author, feminist, and social activist If any female feels she need anything beyond herself to legitimate and validate her existence, she is already giving away her power to be self-defining, her agency.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS 1 Choir member 5 Impolite interruption 10 Rome's port 12 Creamy color 13 Seize by force 14 News summary 15 Talking bear of films 16 Spot to jot 18 Finished off 19 Be whiny 21 Downhill glider 22 Lively tune 24 Leg bone 25 Simple game 29 Weather map marking 30 Musical mixture 32 Writer Beattie 33 Outlaw 34 Hit show letters 35 Safari sighting 37 Carries 39 Cookout spot 40 Bring to mind 41 Flight units 42 On -- with (equivalent) DOWN 1 Ring contests 2 Nod 3 Painter's place 4 Polite address 5 Rail or quail 6 Second person 7 Spot 8 Moon feature 9 Promoted 11 "Bon -- !" 17 Mobile setting 20 Trailing plant 21 Old footwear 23 Salsa choice 25 Doughboy's helmet 26 Set afire 27 "You flatter me too much!" 28 Cry of discovery 29 Heavenly strings 31 Tough puzzle 33 Derisive calls 36 Tiny taste 38 Future embryos



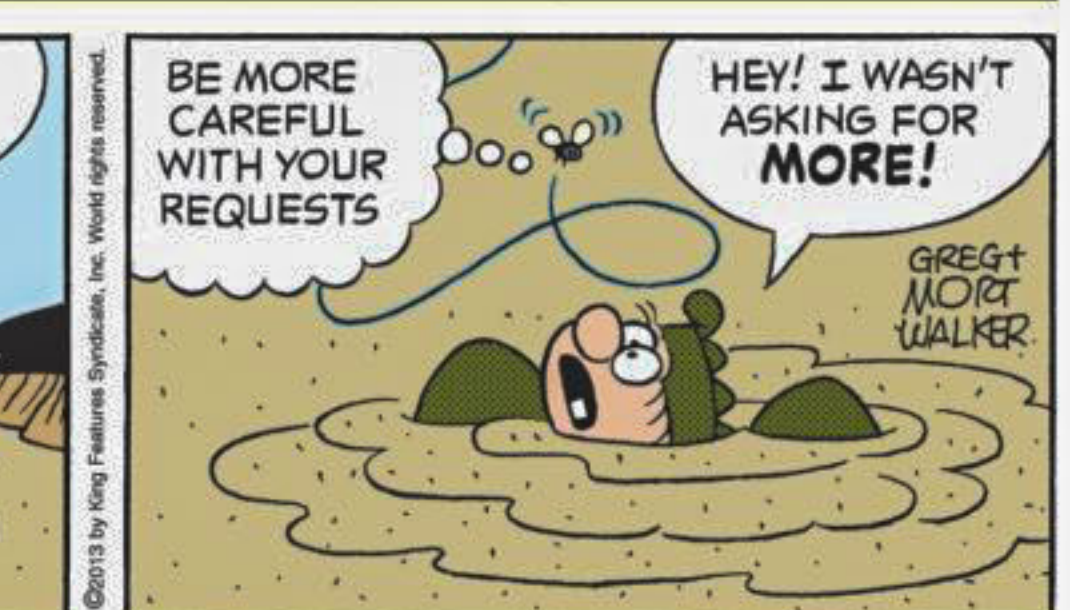
YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

SECTS PACES EMAIL APART CIRCULAR TERRA ELM BATSMAN DIE SUE END EONS GRAND MAR NYE CITED ELLA PAR COD EAR ONATEAR CUB LINED ASTRO ANDRE CORER REAMS OPALS

BEETLE BAILEY



by Mort Walker



BABY BLUES



by Kirkman & Scott

