

ADVERTORIAL

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD 2015

THE POWER OF THE ADOLESCENT GIRL: VISION FOR 2030

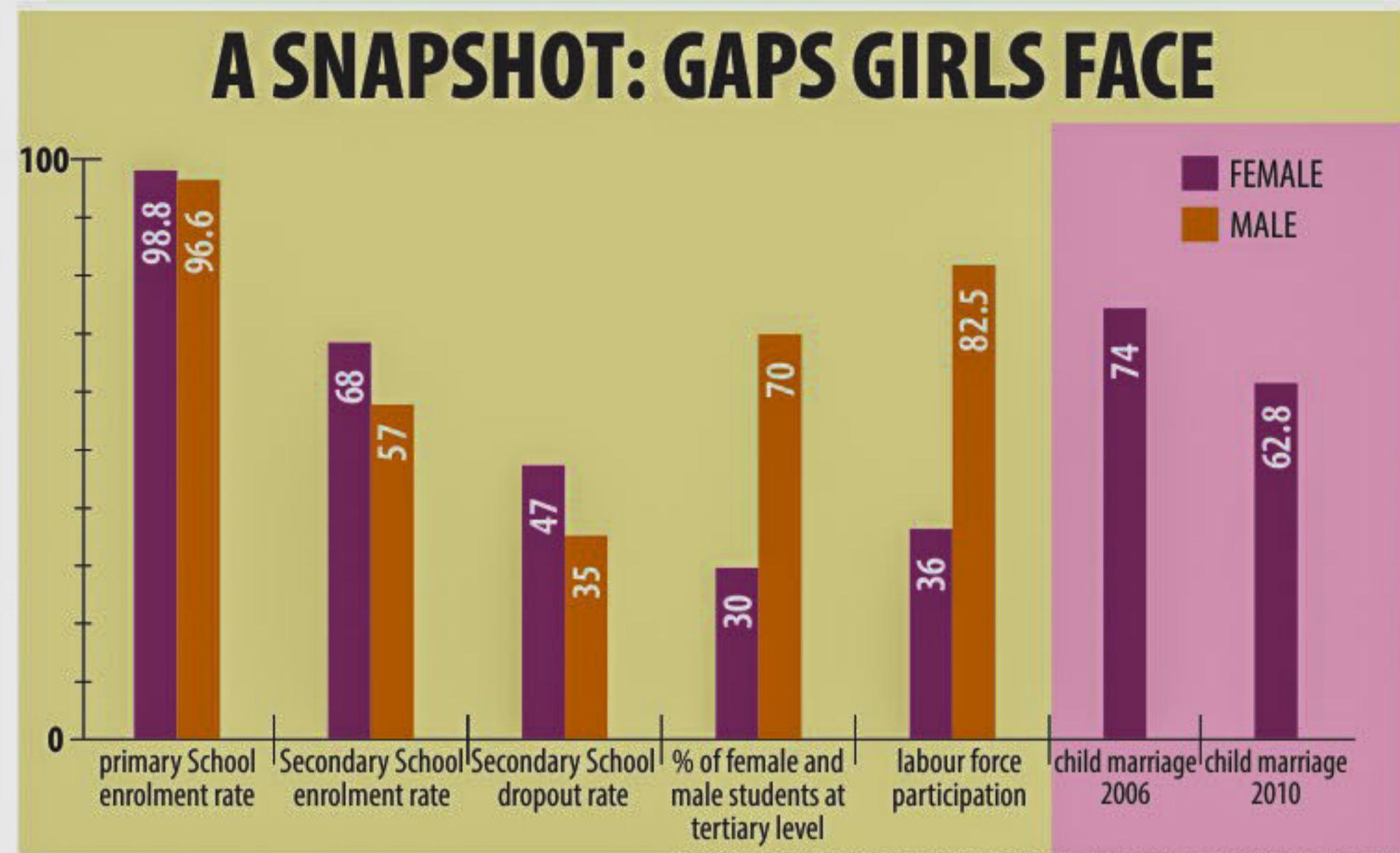
COMMEMORATED for the first time in 2012, the International Day of the Girl Child highlights the importance of promoting girls' rights, eradicating gender inequalities that remain between girls and boys, and addressing the various forms of discrimination and abuse suffered by girls around the world. Gender inequality and the discrimination and abuse experienced by girls perpetuate intergenerational poverty and form the basis of high levels of violence, especially gender-based violence, as well as challenges in the delivery of equitable and sustainable development for all. When discrimination and violence against adolescent girls become the norm, it not only affects overall development, but also limits opportunities and choices, health and wellbeing and the future of adolescent girls. Reducing adolescent girls' vulnerability to violence is vital. To do this, we need to raise awareness amongst all about the inherent value of girls, and challenge those social norms which perpetuate gender inequality. The theme of the International Day of the Girl Child for 2015 is, aptly - given the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - the "Power of the Adolescent Girl: Vision for 2030." This theme recognises the importance of investing in the adolescent girl - in her education, health, nutrition, social skills - so that 15 years from now, adolescent girls of today will be healthy, educated, skilled and employed women. Investing in adolescent girl also makes the achievement of equitable and sustainable

development outcomes more likely. It also ensures that one-half of humanity is given the same opportunities as the other half and can contribute equally to the overall development in the social, economic, political and environmental spheres around the world. In Bangladesh, significant progress has been made in improving the lives of adolescent girls. The enrolment of girls in primary education is near universal and secondary education is a promising 68 percent (BANBEIS 2014). However, the dropout rate is also high at 47 percent (BANBEIS 2014), indicating that a majority of adolescent girls do not complete secondary school. It is important to accelerate our efforts to ensure the availability of quality education and encourage adolescent girls to complete their secondary education. The high prevalence of child marriage, a significant problem which affects the overall development of Bangladesh, and is closely linked to the high dropout rates from secondary education, stands at 63 percent (MICS 2012-2013). The adolescent fertility rate of ever-married women aged 15-19 years, at 113 per 1,000 live births (BDHS 2014), is the highest in South Asia and needs to be halted to improve the overall health and wellbeing of adolescent girls. In Nepal, as in Bangladesh, women marry at a young age, yet Nepal's adolescent birth rate is far lower than that of Bangladesh. The adolescent birth rate in Indonesia, Cambodia and India is 58 percent, 50 percent and 20 percent lower, respectively, than in Bangladesh. The

Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) for married adolescents aged 15-19 years is 51 percent (BDHS 2014), less than the national CPR at 62 percent (BDHS 2014), pointing to another area which needs additional investment. Bangladesh is currently

absolute terms as the country adds at least 50 million more people to reach a staggering total population of minimum 200 million by around 2041, even as fertility rates continue to decrease below replacement levels. Reaching middle income country status, a

to facilitate their positive contribution to the country's economy and development. These girls must be encouraged to stay in school so that both the high prevalence of child marriage and adolescent fertility rates decline. If a large segment of this productive young population is lost to child marriage and early motherhood, Bangladesh will lose a vital asset in the country's development agenda - threatening the realisation of "Vision for 2030." On this special day, dedicated to highlight the wellbeing of the adolescent girl, it is important for all development actors and the private sector in Bangladesh to recognise and commit to the "Power of the Adolescent Girl: Vision for 2030." As detailed by the United Nations, it is important to: invest in adolescent girls' education, health and jobs; promote zero tolerance against physical, mental and sexual violence; combat child marriage; encourage civic and political engagement; and promote gender-responsive legislation. Building on the commitments made at the Girl Summit in London in 2014, we know that unlocking the potential of girls will generate substantial benefits not just for the girls themselves, but for their families and communities, for the economy and for Bangladesh.

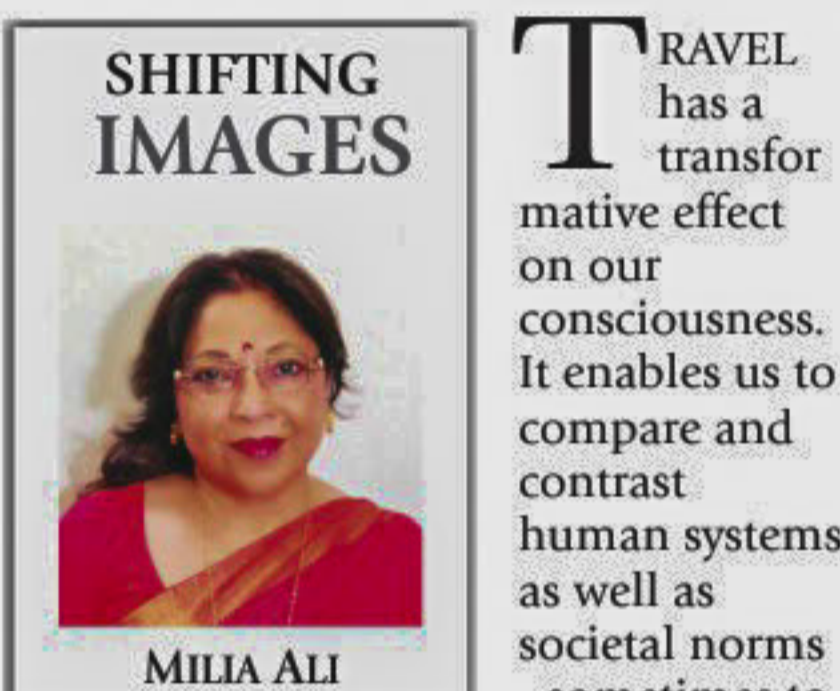


experiencing a one-time "demographic window of opportunity", that can be transformed into a "demographic dividend", provided the right investments are made in young people, as they now constitute 30 percent of the total population. This population cohort will continue to grow in

clear goal of the Bangladesh Government to be achieved by 2021, requires a strong and healthy workforce - of both young men and women. Adolescent Bangladeshis have a right to be provided relevant education and training, life skills and access to health care, and overall access to economic opportunities,



COFFEE WITH A SPOONFUL OF HUMANITY



TRAVEL has a transformative effect on our consciousness. It enables us to compare and contrast human systems as well as societal norms - sometimes to the advantage of the place we are visiting. However, at other times these comparisons can induce nostalgia and make us realise that familiarity often numbs our appreciation for the good things in our own surroundings. My recent visit to Italy was inspiring in many ways. I was impressed by the grandiose scale and artistic beauty of Rome's ancient architecture and its happy, carefree café culture. Just as the city's monuments overwhelmed my aesthetic senses, the fresh smell of espresso and croissant lightened up my mornings. There is yet another engaging side of Rome - it offers the latest fashion in clothes and accessories, stylishly displayed in the shop windows. Taking a walk down Via Condotti (the street lined with designer boutiques) is a gratifying experience, even if the products are beyond one's pocketbook. Quintessentially, Rome is a beautiful blend of the old and the new. ... what else does one need, you may ask? But there were times I felt I did not fit in and not only because I was a foreigner. Partly it was the lack of signs and the absence of elevators in major sites and public places. Of course, the language barrier and dearth of vast open spaces added to my frustration. At the risk of being branded as a killjoy, I must confess that I am relieved that my Roman holiday is over. I am happy to be back home in McLean, Virginia and sitting outside a neighbourhood café in a public square. Despite all the brilliant attractions of Rome, I missed this little town that is a stone's throw from the US capital, but it

The small fountain facing the coffee shop is a mediocre structure that can hardly be compared to the elegance and beauty of the Trevi in Rome. The real focus of the place is not its exquisite architecture, but that it acts as a stage for humanity. Sitting here one can satisfy one's human curiosity in the most unobtrusive and natural way. One rarely sees elegantly dressed women as in Italy (except for the rare occasion

work. There is also the homely sight of a mother wheeling her infant in a pram around the fountain. And, of course, one cannot miss the laughing young people in their casual jeans and T-shirts sipping lattes and exchanging ideas animatedly. The experience is like watching random scenes from several plays with no beginnings or endings. Sipping my coffee on a sunny October morning, I realised why

loosely fitting jacket gets as much respect as a Max Mara coat. The café's egalitarian nature allows the constant flow of guests. There are no defined standards to destroy the public spirit and insulate the clientele from the joyful proximity of diverse groups of people. As I found an explanation for my recurring nostalgia whenever I travel, I realised that we humans are essentially



This humble square in McLean is no match for the villas and piazzas of Rome; however, it's a public space open to everyone. It may not serve gourmet coffee or the best pizza in the world, but it is all-inclusive in character. Sneakers are as acceptable as high-heeled designer shoes.

limited gastronomical choices: salads, cheese and fruit platters and assorted desserts. What my husband and I like most is the steaming Turkish coffee served in a painted enamel coffee pot and poured into quaint ceramic cups. This is what is unique about this country: it offers Bohemian and eclectic experiences like sipping Mediterranean coffee in a suburban café only a few miles from the White House!

when a coiffured lady in her stylish autumn coat appears with her dog on leash). However, what one gets is a glimpse of the lives of ordinary people: the grandfather limping behind his two granddaughters, spending a pleasant hour partaking generously of the café's signature Torta Noccioia (layered hazelnut cake); the attractive Chinese American woman in red slacks eating her salad lunch before dashing back to

travelling to exotic locations makes me nostalgic for America and my neighbourhood coffee shop. This humble square in McLean is no match for the villas and piazzas of Rome; however, it's a public space open to everyone. It may not serve gourmet coffee or the best pizza in the world, but it is all-inclusive in character. Sneakers are as acceptable as high-heeled designer shoes. A worn-out,

products of our environment and habitat. Above all, we are creatures of habit. Our minds are enriched and broadened by our travels, but, sometimes our outward journeys help us rediscover the beauty of the familiar and seemingly mundane! The writer is a renowned Rabindra Sangeet exponent and a former employee of the World Bank. E-mail: shiftingimages@gmail.com

**A WORD A DAY**

**BIBLIPOLE**  
'biblēə pōl/  
a person who buys and sells books, especially rare ones.

**CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH**

**ACROSS**

- 1 Openhanded hits
- 6 Mailbox feature
- 10 Batter's high hit
- 11 Lucy's brother
- 13 Bitter humor
- 14 -- garde
- 15 Black goo
- 16 Used to be
- 18 Golf peg
- 19 Pizza order
- 22 Mine material
- 23 Den
- 24 Kitchen appliance
- 27 Woes on toes
- 28 Road division
- 29 Maple fluid
- 30 Grade aid
- 35 Letter after zeta
- 36 Conk out
- 37 Start of a count
- 38 Exhausted
- 40 Does clerical work
- 42 Church topper
- 42 Conspicuous
- 44 Take wing
- 45 Work breaks

**DOWN**

- 1 Ill will
- 2 Dr Seuss's environmental character
- 3 Left, on a liner
- 4 Bit of wordplay
- 5 Dangerous PC apps
- 6 URL part
- 7 Tyler of "Armageddon"
- 8 Running wild
- 9 Locates on the dial
- 12 Takes the wheel
- 17 High card
- 20 Wanderer
- 21 Wed in haste
- 24 Winter showers
- 25 CPA's pointers
- 26 Toronto's province
- 27 Look after
- 29 Sch. subj.
- 31 Venomous snake
- 32 Parcels out
- 33 Like xenon
- 34 Exams
- 39 Historic period
- 41 -- had it!

**YESTERDAY'S ANSWER**

D	A	M	S	F	L	A	P				
G	E	T	I	T	L	E	T	U	P		
A	L	O	N	E	A	M	O	R	E		
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T	R	I	C	K	L	O	U	P	E		
S	A	M	O	A	O	R	D	E	R		
S	E	X	Y	N	E	A	R				

**BEETLE BAILEY** by Mort Walker

**BABY BLUES** by Kirkman & Scott