

#Revolution Made in Facebook



CLEAR AS MUD
AHMEDE HUSSAIN
 protest had witnessed a prime ministerial directive that cancelled the Value Added Tax. Save for the real protest that was made by blocking the busy thoroughfares of the capital, the movement was planned, organised and executed on Facebook. And like all such movements, it was powered by the middle class.
 There are more instances like this where people power has flexed its muscle through the social media. Take the gruesome murder of Samiul Alam Rajon. The 13-year-old was chained and hit several times on his head, stomach and nails with a stick. His body bore 64 injury marks. The brutal act was videoed

and uploaded on YouTube by his assailants. Little did his attacker know that Rajon has a famous predecessor - Derrion Albert, a Chicago teenager who was beaten to death in a similar fashion five years ago. The video of Albert's death, which was captured on someone's handphone, went viral on the net. The incident led to a violent maelstrom in the US; mainstream media soon took notice; President Barack Obama sent the US Attorney General and the Secretary of Education to discuss youth violence with the city mayor.
 It did not take long for Rajon's video to go viral either. The 30-minute-long clip showed the boy begging for some mercy and a glass of water to the amused laughter of his attackers. The sight of Rajon, chained like slaves, crying for help was viewed with shock, and JusticeForRajon as a hashtag on Facebook and other social networking sites soon started to trend. The print and television media picked it up a day or two later. Rajon's killers, one of whom included a local ruling party hiphop, were eventually arrested and are now facing trial. Through his Facebook profile, it was found out that one of the alleged

murderers had fled to Saudi Arabia, which led to his arrest and extradition.
 A few days ago, Shohagi Jahan Tonu, a Comilla Victoria College student, was raped and killed. Her body was discovered in a field at the heart of Comilla Cantonment. The newspapers were able to cover the news long after it went viral, and more and more incidents of rape and murder started to flood our timeline. Indeed, the Tonu incident adds to a long list of failures of the print and electronic media in understanding the value of a certain news item.
 To put it less harshly, it can be said without any reasonable doubt that slowly and surely two different types of source of news are emerging - one is slow to respond and is centred round old narratives. The other, made and powered by the middle class, is jazzy, judging and opinion-based. The latter, definitely, is the new sexy.
 As demonstrated by the three major movements described, the social media, through different groups and pages, is letting its users know about certain events immediately after it happens, sometimes even

in real time. A carefully thought-out opinion piece can be put as a Facebook status within minutes by the click of a mouse.
 Instead of the barrel of a gun, power now grows out of the click of a mouse. This is especially so for many democracies which are showing signs of intolerance. For a strong regime in the 21st century, it is rather difficult to hold onto power through brute force alone. Rather, repression or use of power in Weberian terms, creates what Andres Olfsgård, Raj M Desai and Tarik Yousef in their book calls the 'dictator's dilemma'. In *The Logic of Authoritarian Bargain*, the trio say, "... (sometimes) citizens feign support for the ruler even as they collide to rebel, increasing the degree of insecurity. More likely, some form of redistribution to citizens is necessary to secure and maintain their loyalty... regimes are therefore said to rely on an 'authoritarian bargain,' or an implicit arrangement between ruling elites and citizens whereby citizens relinquish political influence in exchange for public spending."
 It will be unduly harsh to call the present Bangladesh regime dictatorial or

authoritarian even. But signs of increased public spending and a serious emphasis on economic growth are evident in the way the country is presently run. The focus has shifted from politics to economy, and its steady growth has welcomed many citizens to the fold of the middle class. All at the expense of politics, popularly perceived as the domain of the unprincipled, not an honest man's cup of tea.
 The country does not have an effective opposition, neither in the street nor in the parliament. The free media at times shy away from bringing up seriously unpleasant issues. The only channel that the middle class, the children of the growth-driven political economy, has been left with to vent its anger is the social media. This is where Facebook comes into play, and this is why it might as well become the barometer by which we will have to measure discontent.
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Bangladesh: The case for renewable energy

MD. JUBAIR AHMED

GOLDMAN Sachs, one of the largest investment banks in the world, has identified Bangladesh as one of the 'Next Eleven' emerging economies, which means that Bangladesh has the potential to become one of the largest and most influential world economies this century. Although the country was rocked by political turmoil in the early part of this decade, the stability reached in recent years has come to further aid the growth process.
 Achieving growth is one thing; sustaining it is another. Bangladesh now faces a two-fold challenge or opportunity, if one looks at it that way. The first is to capitalise on the current growth rate of above 6 percent and take it a step further: a continued growth rate of over 7 percent, for the next decade is the most desired goal. The second challenge is to ensure sustenance of the growth rate. A coupled success in achieving both these targets would ensure the goal of reaching the middle income country status by the beginning of the next decade.
 As the economy prospers due to growing industrialisation, the need for energy grows exponentially. Continued supply of energy is an integral infrastructural requirement that drives economic growth. Bangladesh, while performing impressively till date to meet surging energy needs, still has a long way to go to be self-sufficient in this sector. According to the United States Energy Association (USEA), the energy supply deficiency in Bangladesh this year stands at 19 percent. With the demand poised to rise with time, closing the gap will be a mammoth undertaking indeed.

The government is committed, and it will need all the help it can get. The amount spent in oil and coal imports is disrupting the annual GDP by as much as 2 percent annually. The natural gas reserves are expected to run out by 2020, while the coal reserves are expected to exhaust themselves with increasing use. The government has already invested huge amounts behind new grids as well as a nuclear plant that is to be established in Rooppur. However, despite the obvious advantages of the grids and the power plant, they are vulnerable to unstable weather or human accidents, and once disturbed, may cause environmental and health disasters. Ukraine (Chernobyl) and Japan (Fukushima) are among the victims of such catastrophes.
 Use of non-renewable energy resources has multi-faceted environmental and health hazards as well. Burning of fossil fuels like coal and oil for power generation emits greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide, which are primarily responsible for ozone layer depletion, global warming, and respiratory diseases. Acid rain created by the emission of chemicals like sulfur into the atmosphere, often as a result of conversion of fossil fuels into electricity, corrodes machinery and sometimes severely harms local ecosystems. News of oil spills in rivers and oceans, a very relatable example of which is the 2014 Sundarbans oil spill, have been on the rise. The recent sinking of a coal-laden vessel in Shela River is another tragic example. These accidents have devastating impacts on aquatic life.
 The only globally acknowledged way to address the situation right now is to make optimum use of renewable

energy sources. It will help to mitigate any shortage issues, while dramatically reducing the dependence on non-renewable natural resources. Only 62 percent of Bangladeshis had access to electricity in 2014. Initially introduced to supply electricity to those with no access to the power source, the solar energy method has already demonstrated great potential in solving the imminent crisis on a residential, industrial, regional, and even national scale. Very recently, 786 lighting poles in the Chittagong EPZ have been powered entirely by the use of solar technology, which speaks volumes about its potential to resolve the electricity crisis on an even bigger scale in future. Moreover, according to a report in Reuters, the introduction of solar power in 1996 in Bangladesh, which is steadily expanding, has already saved 200,000 tonnes of kerosene worth about \$180 million in 18 years.
 Bangladesh is blessed with an

abundance of water. The Karnafuli Hydro Power Station, for instance, has a capacity to generate 230 MW power. Water power currently accounts for 1.88 percent of total power supply in Bangladesh, according to the Bangladesh Power Development Board. Effective utilisation of the resource, using apt expertise, efficient management and government support to explore further opportunities, will help support the energy needs of the country. Wind turbines are another highly effective solution to generate electricity using the power of wind. According to an article published in the International Journal for Sustainable and Green Energy, wind energy has the potential to generate as much as 2000 MW of electricity in the coastal regions of Bangladesh if the 724 km long coastline of the country can be utilised to generate wind energy.
 Our counterparts in the US, and many countries in Europe, and even India, have started utilising renewable

energy sources with a long term vision. The Geysers in California boasts of being the world's largest geothermal power installation in the world, with a rated capacity of 750 MW. 11.4 percent of the energy consumed in the European Union comes from the utilisation of wind energy.
 Germany presents the greatest success story in this regard. More than 30 percent of the total energy consumed in the country comes from a combined use of renewable energy sources like wind, biogas, and solar. The proportion of usage is poised to increase every passing year; we can definitely take lessons from Germany's success story.
 It is time we start considering renewable energy as a potentially major national power source as well. There are experts in the country who are willing to help. We could also learn from our international counterparts who already have achieved success. All we would need is awareness among our people on the efficient use of power, and apt support from our government, which has already demonstrated a strong willingness to resolve the issue.
 From a different perspective, the harsh truth that we often conveniently avoid is that Mother Earth is dying, and we are helping to quicken her demise. Global warming caused by excessive extraction and industrial burning of fossil fuels is making our environment more unliveable every day. Rising sea levels due to global warming is putting the very existence of Bangladesh at risk. The resources will all run out some day. It is high time that we consider what kind of a world, and country, we are leaving behind for our children.
 The writer is CEO, BASE Technologies.



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BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker

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শেল্টেক্ বর্ষপূর্তি মেলা ২০১৬
 ১২-৩১ মার্চ ২০১৬ (সকাল ৯টা থেকে ৫টা পর্যন্ত)
 স্থান: শেল্টেক্ বীথিকা, ১১৪/১ দ্বিতীয় কলোনী মাজার রোড, মিরপুর, ঢাকা।
 ঢাকার বিভিন্ন লোকেশনে শেল্টেক্-এর অ্যাপার্টমেন্ট এবং নিষ্কটক রেডি জমি বিক্রয় চলছে...
 অ্যাপার্টমেন্ট: ধানমন্ডি, বনানী, কাঁঠালবাগান, বড় মগবাজার, সিদ্ধেশ্বরী, চামেলীবাগ, উত্তরা, মতিঝিল, বাসাবো, মিরপুর এবং বসুন্ধরা (সাইজ: ৮০৫-২২৪৫ বর্গফুট)
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 23 Switch settings
 24 Cattle call
 25 Influence
 27 Tap dances, informally
 29 1040 org.
 30 Rudely interrupts
 32 First, to Francisco
 34 Shooter ammo
 35 Pocket beeper
 36 Acropolis sight
 38 Different
 39 Wasn't thrifty

40 Nick's dog
 41 "By Jove!"

DOWN
 1 Social group
 2 Seem
 3 Venice land-mark
 4 Junior, to senior
 5 Stockpile
 6 Curse
 7 Spielberg film of 2015
 8 Real
 10 Stair-case posts
 12 Sleepy's friend
 17 --a Small World"
 19 Spring period
 22 Tree part
 24 Vehicle parts
 25 Safari sight
 26 Printer's goofs
 27 "Ben--"
 28 Brown pigment
 30 Hall of Fame catcher
 31 Unpleasant
 33 Convene
 37 AP rival

STOP DIETS
 WAGED AWAITS
 ANDRE NORMA
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