

MUHAMMAD ALI'S 'true face of Islam' vs. terrorism

PLEASURE IS ALL MINE



SHAH HUSAIN IMAM

FEW men were rewarded and vindicated in their lifetime as Muhammad Ali had been. Such a man of action was he in professional boxing, against discrimination and for truth and justice that there would be little posthumous by way of honouring him. Fewer still come through as a man of substance dawning deeper and deeper on the consciousness levels of people after his death as he did.



In this Nov. 23, 1988, file photo, former world heavyweight boxing champ Muhammad Ali prays with a class of Muslim boys at Dafaalah el Sa'em Mosque in Khartoum, Sudan. (PHOTO: ABDER RAOUF, FILE/AP)

But more than that, as Louisville, Kentucky says goodbye to its favourite son Muhammad Ali and world leaders pay homage to his memory, his legacy acquires a sharper meaning and poignant relevance in today's world plagued by terrorism.

Interfaith services in an apt recognition of Muhammad Ali's unifying role representing 'the true face of Islam' are on hand to celebrate his life and works as part of the funeral proceedings. He wouldn't yield to pressures from sponsors, exerted twice before a heavyweight championship encounter to ostensibly distance himself from Islam. His association with Malcom X and hiring a Muslim woman cook for this camp miffed some potential sponsors threatening not to back Ali.

Equally, he wouldn't compromise on a matter of conscience. At what price had he refused to be drafted in the US army for a stint in the Vietnam War as a conscientious objector? Four years in jail, aged 28 to 32, a prime span of time lost to his career and world boxing!

So Muhammad Ali drew on his religious beliefs and humanitarian principles to launch a kind of Jihad of his own. It was so very different from the version that the fanatics parade today. In fact, not long ago Muhammad Ali had reportedly come hard on brutalisation in the name of religion. Speaking of targeted terrorist killings in Bangladesh, the spate has been mind-boggling - 48 deaths in 46 attacks during the last 18 months. Until

June 5 this year alone, casualty figure at 18 was high compared with 30 for the whole year in 2015. This includes a new dimensional choice of a target: Policemen have come under attack before but here a reprisal has been wreaked on the wife of a police superintendent for his work. Falling in pattern though, has been the brutal murder of a Hindu priest in Jhalakathi. One theory behind the hacking incidents is that Ansarul Islam Bangladesh and JMB with suspected

links to ISIS may have coordinated the operations. From the government side, an explanation has come forth that terrorists are 'soft targeting' individuals in contrast to attacks on government installations. Is this a measure of success that the perpetrators are soft targeting? The vulnerability zone is expanding which is very worrisome. At the end of the day, citizens of certain predictable categories are dying, sense of security is being reduced generally,

and the administration's credibility in protecting life and limbs of citizens comes under question mark.

We think all this is avoidable provided the direction swerves towards counter-terrorism and updated to match the strategic shifts of the terrorists. It is quite possible that the hired murderers only know themselves and act on the directive of just the next man up without any knowledge of anyone else in the structure involved in terrorist operations. There are also perhaps 'sleeping cells' mingling undetected in the community that look over potential targets and assess their movements to maneuver an operation with a lethal effect. It is also learnt that those who had been jailed around 2009 in terrorist cases were subsequently released on serving their terms but a systematic follow up on their status is said to be lacking.

Unless a good concerted effort is made to neutralise terrorism and concrete results shown in rounding up and punishing the culprits, public and community cooperation, a vital prerequisite for success, may remain elusive. Of course, an impression about some quarters being at work to destabilise the country or betray a sense of the state weakening or may seem to be weakening, is gaining ground. This is a serious concern going forward. It needs to be addressed head-on rather than taken in one's stride.

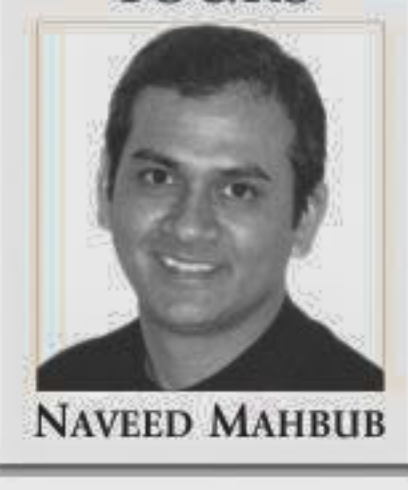
The writer is a contributor of The Daily Star.

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Gloat with a Battle Cry

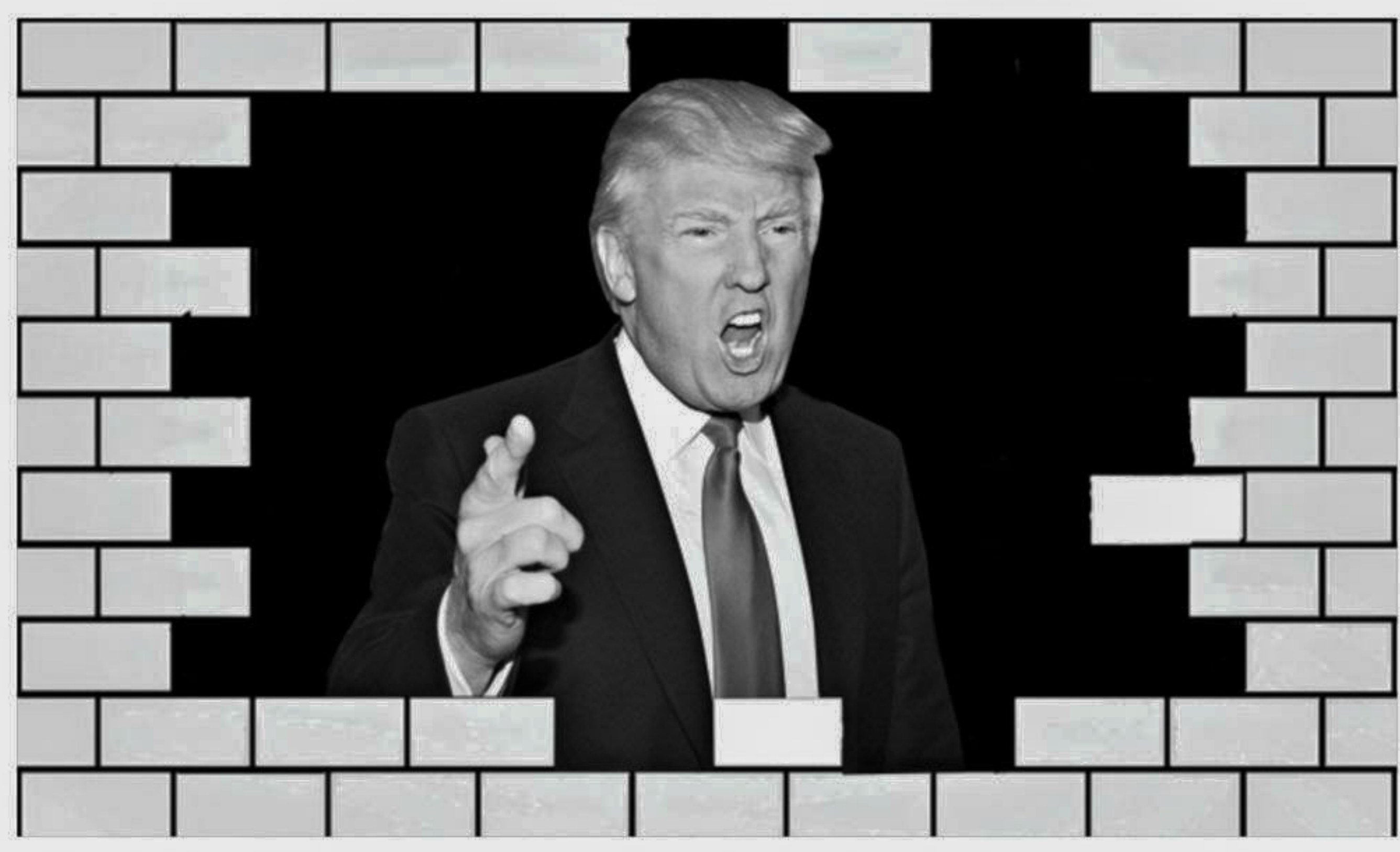
For Trump, the wall makes absolute sense. After all, he is a real estate magnate. He HAS to BUILD a legacy, so why not something that he's really good at.

HUMOROUSLY YOURS



NAVEED MAHBUB

PARIS. I hold the hand of the elderly American gentleman a few extra seconds as we exchange greetings. I had to. This is my first time touching an ardent believer of 'Trump for President'. "Why?" I ask. "Because she is a liar." Hillary Clinton is the reason for him to go for the Republican hopeless, er, hopeful. It seems that the choice is determined by the lack of it. True, Obama comes with his charisma. But the deal is sealed in 2008 when America witnesses John McCain's prowess as a decision maker through the choosing of his running mate, Sarah Palin. But British comedian Imran Yusuf endorses one election promise of Trump: "I support his wanting to set up CCTV cameras in mosques. We can now find out what happens to our shoes during Jumma prayers." Looking back at the comedic windfall in the form of George W. Bush (I'm sure the comedians brought him back into office for a second term for another four years of uninterrupted supply of comedy material), many a comedian secretly desires Mr Trump in office. The jokes are flowing as is the reality of what started out as a joke in the form of Trump for office. The race is on. Clinton wants a reformed America. Trump wants a restored America - back to the original



America (brown?). Clinton is on reforming Wall Street. Trump is on reforming the wall along the US-Mexico border, paid for by Mexico and probably built by Mexicans residing in the US. (BSE, don't start getting ideas...). The Mexican President doesn't entertain the thought, but is surely entertained at the prospect. His jeers prompt Trump to toot his trumpet further, "Guess what, the wall just got taller." For Trump, the wall makes absolute sense. After all, he is a real estate magnate. He HAS to BUILD a legacy, so

why not something that he's really good at. What a brilliant idea! Why didn't the 'Native' American think of this and build a wall along the East Coast of the US? No, no, the world would still not be deprived of the flamboyant Trump, but simply see him sitting today in his ancestral Berlin, clambering for a full Curious Case of Benjamin Button on Ronald Reagan's "Tear down the Wall!" I wonder what lobbying is taking place among the Secret Service community as to who will be on Trump's security detail should he be in

office. The bar for entry just got higher, only Vulcans (of Star Trek's Spock fame) may apply, able to suppress grins which are preludes to laughter. They'll have great memoirs to write, as one retired man in black from Bill Clinton's White House days writes of a security risk called Monica Lewinsky, hearing a vase crash in the Oval Office, a yelling Hillary Clinton, a grinning (thumbs up) Slick Willy emerging with a black eye the following day while attributing his panda look to an 'allergic reaction'. I wonder if some disgruntled, flustered men in black on Trump's detail may

deliberately let down their guards so as to see Mr. President being kidnapped by some extremists followed by the ransom call, as narrated by comedian Samuel See, "Unless you meet our demands, we will do something unthinkable to Mr. Trump - return him unscathed." And the general American voters are looking at it all as a duet between Donald Duck and Hilary Duff? Quite the contrary. Many panicked Americans are contemplating to move north to Canada, unless Justin Trudeau decides to build a wall (paid for by Trump). How I miss you Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert during this comedy bonanza. The latter's words, "Trump is a toddler wearing man pants." And that perhaps explains why despite his views on Muslims, Trump is no stingy in paying his tributes to every young boy's hero, Muhammad Ali. Ali: "float like a butterfly, sting like a bee". Trump: gloat with a battle cry, sting like a flea (at best). Never has the world missed a champion more. Too bad Ali isn't around to say once again, "It isn't the mountains ahead to climb that wear you out, it's the pebble in your shoe." In the US Presidential elections, there is the pebble and there is the mountain. And THAT is the serious issue with this election - one of the two from Clinton and Trump is going to be President.

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

QUOTABLEQuote

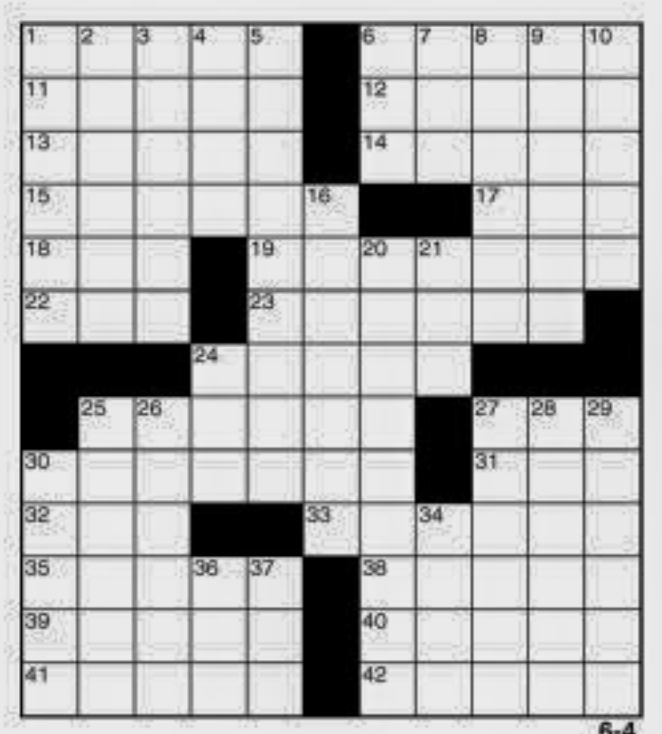


FERNAND BRAUDEL

French historian and a leader of the Annales School. Social science virtually abhors the event. Not without reason; the short-term is the most capricious and deceptive form of time.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS
- 1 Ship parts
 - 6 Makes sound
 - 11 Early Mexican
 - 12 Customary
 - 13 Cake unit
 - 14 Elbows on the table
 - 15 "Ain't that the truth!"
 - 17 Ready to go
 - 18 Horse-shoe shape
 - 19 Gun error
 - 22 Cochlea setting
 - 23 Be disloyal to
 - 24 Bronze or brass
 - 25 Groom's garb
 - 27 Favorite
 - 30 Came to a point
 - 31 Exalted poem
 - 32 Broadcast
 - 33 Warren's 'Ishtar' costar
 - 35 Parody
 - 38 "Republic" writer
 - 39 Reeves of "Speed"
 - 40 Bengal cat
 - 41 Tempress
- 42 Newspaper essays
- DOWN
- 1 Ill will
 - 2 Showy shrub
 - 3 Designer
 - 4 Casual tops
 - 5 Phone tap foil
 - 6 Golf goal
 - 7 Mex. neighbor
 - 8 Putin's place
 - 9 Canteen or cafe
 - 10 Roofing material
 - 16 Produced
 - 20 Challenged
 - 21 Sauté
 - 24 Cut drastically
 - 25 Asian capital
 - 26 Outcry
 - 27 Thick soup
 - 28 Ready for print
 - 29 Some singers
 - 30 Chores
 - 34 Faux pas
 - 36 Binary digit
 - 37 Merriment



YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

M	A	T	C	H	B	A	T	H	E
A	C	H	O	O	O	C	H	E	R
P	T	E	R	O	O	C	E	A	N
C	E	D	E	U	P	T	O		
A	W	R	Y	E	L	S	A		
B	A	Y	B	L	U	E	J	A	Y
E	V	I	T	A	T	R	A	D	E
T	E	N	A	B	L	E	M	A	N
G	L	E	E	R	A	M	S		
A	R	G	O	G	R	O	G		
G	I	A	N	T	A	M	A	S	S
E	L	M	E	R	G	A	M	U	T
S	E	E	D	Y	E	N	E	M	Y

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker



BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott

