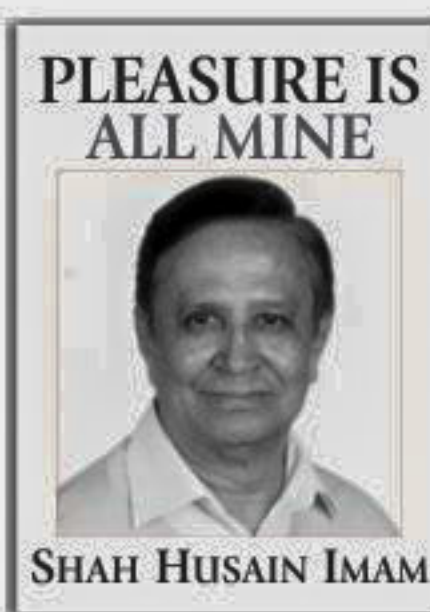


Time to switch on a positive mode



PLEASURE IS ALL MINE
 HE doom-gloom cries are muffled when you hear the Pope's voice of sanity, recognise a shift in our counter-terrorism efforts, and consider some of the positive vibes about Bangladesh.

A Wall Street Journal's online report last Sunday highlighted the Pope's comment to the effect that "It is not Islam but global economic disparities that fuel terrorism." On his way back from Poland to the Vatican, he told journalists aboard a plane that it's wrong to equate Islam with terrorism. "If I talk about Islamic terrorism I have to talk about Catholic terrorism. When money sits at the centre of world economy and not people, terrorism gets to expand." "We should talk about it," the Pope added underlining the need for interfaith dialogues. These then should culminate in a convention at the world stage under the UN auspices.

A new, robust multilateralism built on the rock-bed of commonality of interests to save the planet like in the case of facing up to climate change has to be forged to fight terrorism. The challenges posed by both the phenomena bode ill for mankind; only that militancy carries an immediacy about it to be halted.

This compelling global agenda may be viewed in its three aspects: First, ISIS being on the run from its territorial strongholds is ordering loyalist cells to go on randomised killing sprees. This evokes unease about when and where it strikes next. Secondly, far right reactions of the opposite kind raise a spectre around the corner; and thirdly, sectarian conflicts already on a

simmer could take on a cauldron proportion, especially in the Middle East and North Africa.

So far as Bangladesh is concerned, it has graduated from a reactive to a proactive mode of fighting militancy. Counter-terrorism denoting a preventative capacity has started playing out since the nerve-wrecking Gulshan terror incident ending by virtue of a successful army commando operation a month ago. The following intervention at Sholakia, one kilometre short of the massive Eid congregation and the wholesale prevention of a planned terrorist attack from Kalyanpur with timely tip-off, spoke of tangible progress in dealing with incessant militancy. It appears, all the incidents threw up important clues to work on a set of hypotheses to zero in on two masterminds— Canadian passport holder of Bangladeshi origin Tamim Ahmed Chowdhury and the sacked army major Ziaul Haq. They were reportedly behind Gulshan-Sholakia terror attacks including country-wide target killings. The police have declared TK. 20 lakh in prize money each, for information leading to their arrest.

That said, we briefly turn to the debate centring on some UGC proposals for greater supervisory authority over the private universities by way of what appears to be 'a blanket terror watch.' The proposals are basically two-fold: One, seating of an observer on the Trustee Board meetings; and two, formation of a three-member committee to 'closely watch if any militant activity is going on in the 134 private and public universities across the country.'

We are reminded by the president of the private universities' association and academics of the existing provisions for government and UGC representatives, to be in the private university syndicate and an



PHOTO: STAR

Whatever institutionalisation has taken place among the well-run private universities benefitting the cause of higher education should not even be unwittingly put in peril.

UGC representative in the academic council. Thus, the proposed appointment of an observer to the Trustee Board through an amendment to the relevant act could smack of a control freak superfluous as it may sound. If pushed through, it could stifle the spontaneous workings of the universities. One wonders how terrorism could be spawned in trustee board meetings!

Whatever institutionalisation has taken place among the well-run private universities benefitting the cause of higher education should not even be unwittingly put in peril.

The manab bandhans, i.e human chains, formed throughout the country by the educational institutions with clock-work timing was a definitive step towards awareness building from within and without. Furthermore, it marked a resounding demonstration of solidarity, collective will and commitment against exploitation of religion for utterly wrongful causes.

Here are some good tidings for Bangladesh: BMI Research, an affiliate of the New York based prestigious rating organisation Fitch, has ranked Bangladesh

among the top ten emerging markets of the world. Terrorism is not unique to Bangladesh, its rising spectre is only calling for professional handling.

We must reciprocate the feel good sentiments expressed by some major development partners to stand by us through building a climate of confidence for them.

On an inspirational note, we share the findings of the Happy Planet Index survey placing Bangladesh eighth in the list of ten most happy countries in the world.

The writer is a columnist of The Daily Star.



The next UN Secretary General should be a woman and a feminist

WINNIE BYANYIMA

THE process for arguably the top political job on the planet is well underway. And the time is right for a woman and a feminist to take the helm.

The United Nations (UN) Security Council is continuing its consideration of candidates for the next UN Secretary-General, with the next "straw poll" due to take place on Friday August 5th.

Backed by public debates and online campaigns, this selection process for the Secretary-General has been the most transparent and accessible yet – driven in part by tireless efforts from civil society.

But the decision to appoint essentially rests with the Security Council's five permanent members in what has been, since 1946, a remarkably secretive selection procedure, one which has given us three Europeans, two Africans, two Asians and one Latin American – all men – in 70 years.

This process has never produced a female secretary general.

In 2006 the Secretary-General selection process included only one woman in seven candidates. This time round, half the current candidates are women. There is no shortage of talent. Yet the initial

signs are not promising. The Security Council's first straw poll on July 21st saw only one woman among the top five.

The long selection process ahead must reverse this. The absurd male monopoly on the UN's top job must come to an end. The next Secretary-General must be both a woman and a feminist, with the determination and leadership to promote women's rights and gender equality.

Growing up as an activist under an oppressive dictatorship in Uganda, the UN was a friend to those of us who fought our way to freedom, as it was for the millions that joined decolonisation struggles in the African continent. Today, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Paris Climate Agreement agreed in 2015 are testament to the UN's global role and reach, and a legacy of Ban Ki-moon's outstanding leadership.

Yet the UN is failing to meet its founding tenets to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" and uphold human rights for those who are powerless. For the UN's new leader, reversing this sounds near-impossible amidst protracted conflicts, a lack of respect for international humanitarian law and a massive global displacement crisis. Fulfilling the pledge to "leave no

one behind" is perhaps the biggest political challenge. The new Secretary-General must grapple with the spiralling crisis of extreme economic inequality that keeps people poor, undermines economic growth and threatens the health of democracies. And a low carbon pathway will not happen without strong UN leadership to drive drastic reductions from the richest in our societies, whose lifestyles are responsible for the majority of them.

A new feminist UN Secretary General will ensure that more women serve as heads of UN agencies, peacekeeping missions, diplomatic envoys, and senior mediators who collectively can strengthen the global peace and security agenda.

Choosing a woman goes far beyond symbolism and political correctness. The discrimination of women and girls goes to the core of any and all analyses of the world's economic, political and environmental problems.

A feminist woman Secretary-General will, by definition and action, ensure gender equality is put at the heart of peace, security and

development. In doing so, she will truly champion the UN's core values of human rights, equality and justice.

Such an appointment – far too long in coming – would fulfil promises given by world leaders 21 years ago at the historic UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing to nominate more women to senior posts in the UN. In the past decade, women have filled less than a quarter of senior roles at the organisation, according to UN

women's equal access to positions of decision-making power and a clear process to get there, gender equality, global security and peace will never be realised.

And it will take a woman feminist Secretary-General to advance the bold, comprehensive women's human rights agenda in intergovernmental fora that is needed to address the multiple and intertwined challenges facing us in the 21st century. Only a woman

She should, too, boost international efforts to empower women economically – thus strengthening national economies and prosperity for all – and tackling the harmful social norms that trap women in poverty and powerlessness.

The new Secretary-General must also reimagine the role of the UN in a world radically different to the one it was set up to serve and be bold in leading its reform.

The UN must be made more inclusive, accountable, democratic, effective, and reflective of a world in which political and economic power has shifted. And the UN must be able to protect its unique role as a genuinely multilateral institution that acts in the interests of all people and all countries. Integrity must not be undermined by the influence of private sector actors and their money.

The Security Council, particularly the five permanent members, must choose change and progress over continuity. They must have the foresight to ensure they listen to the voices of the public and select the Secretary-General that the world and the UN needs today: a woman and a feminist.

The writer is Executive Director of Oxfam International. © IPS

QUOTABLE Quote

JOHN STUART MILL

Genius can breathe freely only in an atmosphere of freedom

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- Hold tightly
- Blueprint data
- Ham's device
- National symbol
- Delighted
- Vigor
- Concealed
- Airport screening org.
- Chaotic tendency
- Tire track
- Golfer Ernie
- Catalan painter
- Nolonger fresh
- Origami need
- Battle group
- Gift tag word
- Misery
- Laborers
- Brownish gray
- Circle segment
- Boxing great
- Where there's nothing new
- Perfume
- Wear away
- Lingerie item

DOWN

- Search blindly
- Blackbird
- Skilled
- Knight's title
- Driving hazard
- Squalid
- Grievor of "Jackie Brown"
- Selfish act
- Sense of finality
- Capitol worker
- Hula Swayers
- Depend
- School grade
- Wood shop sweepings
- Clobber
- Corrected
- Sites of some swings
- Cavalry base
- Like toads
- Wall worker
- Frisco player
- Close
- History section

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

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S	N	I	F	F	E	R	A	S	E	
D	A	L	Y		D	A	R	E	S	

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker

BEETLE BAILEY: DON'T GO ON GUARD DUTY LIKE THAT, ZERO, IT'S RAINING HARD

SARGE: BE SURE YOU'RE WELL COVERED

BEETLE BAILEY: THANKS, SARGE

BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott

MAN: PUT IT BACK, HAMMIE.

CHILD: DAD, WAIT! IF I CATCH HIM, I'LL SPLIT THE CANDY WITH YOU FIFTY-FIFTY!