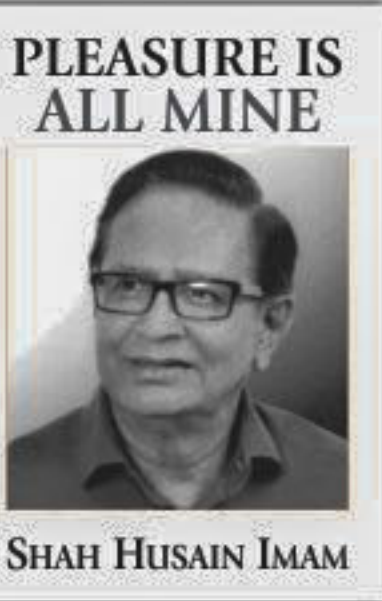


What next for our cricket?



SHAH HUSAIN IMAM

PLEASURE IS ALL MINE

THE Tigers' head coach Chandika Hathurusingha, while speaking to the media on conclusion of the New Zealand-Bangladesh cricketing series, gave his assessment of the performances under his mentorship with panache: "It is not all doom and gloom". Some maybe; for, how could he have sloughed off the effect of eight defeats in a row! "There are a lot of positives to build up on", he added. One could not have agreed more with him on that, but only wished he had elaborated on 'the positives' keeping the broader picture or the whole team in view.

Actually his words of confidence swirled around, to be exact, two newcomers: Kamrul Islam and Mehedi Hassan. Indeed they showed promise in their first tour of Bangladesh. "How their demeanour changed in the field from the England series to this one", noted the Bangladesh coach, adding "I can see them learning quickly". One could not help thinking though that Miraj was not even half as effective in New Zealand as he had been against England. The fury was missing; a large number of runs were

scored off his bowling.

This tour has been touted as a ground-breaking one in that five players made their international debut across three formats. In addition, as many as seven embarked on their first tour away from home. All this is fine and dandy but what begs question is: with what outcome?

By being fixated on individuals, the selection procedure was sometimes opaque and to an extent proved counterproductive. But the controversy around team selection does not exonerate top order batsmen of their failings at demanding moments.

We have been rightly critical of individualistic flashes of performances falling short of making partnerships corresponding to fluctuating game situations. The same went for bowling where after an initial or important breakthrough, the charge would fritter away.

Well, it could be argued that a large contingent was taken as an investment in future. Even solvent countries take compact teams because the aim is to remain focused to deliver the goods.

Tamim has taken responsibility for the defeat in the second Test. In two ODIs and one T-20, we came pretty close to clinching victory. For those debacles, would someone come forward and take responsibility thereof? Again, does the matter rest with taking responsibility for a defeat? What matters is avoiding repeating the same.

With competitive games it is counterproductive to be making goody-goody admissions of failure to plaster one's bruised image. The proof of the pudding will always be in the eating, not in its décor.

The plain fact is no sooner had our batsmen adjusted to short balls at good pace, they were upset by deliberately bowled high bouncers one after another as a ploy to ruffle our batsmen. Bouncers are not forbidden but subject to regulations that need to be applied scrupulously so that

none is hurt. A line has to be drawn between excitement of the contest and the physical safety of players. When the top quarter of the Bangladesh side was hurt to be hospitalized, the team cohesion broke down. In this dismal injury scenario, it is good to know that pacer Mustafizur is healing to full fitness. Also, Taskin's brilliant bowling in Tests is going to be an asset moving forward.

Mental strength training among the cricketers is emerging as a priority issue with the BCB and perhaps BKSP. This is why - in the opening Test in Wellington, Bangladesh was bowled out for 160 after taking a 56-run lead in the first inning. As though in a pattern, in the second and final 5-day in Christchurch, we suffered a similar fate in the second innings eventually capitulating with a day to spare.

We played the New Zealand series after a two-year time lag. But we are well and truly into loaded successive fixtures to be playing with India, South Africa and England - all in 2017. Depending on our performances in these games, our ranking will be determined. This is also key to our heading for the World Cup directly without having to play in the qualifying rounds.

Just see, New Zealand because of their straight wins against Bangladesh have been elevated over Pakistan in Test ranking!

The writer is a contributor of *The Daily Star*.

What matters is avoiding repeating the same. With competitive games it is counterproductive to be making goody-goody admissions of failure to plaster one's bruised image.

Tweeter-in-Chief



NAVEED MAHBUB

HUMOROUSLY YOURS

US finally comes to terms with test cricket - a long drawn out game where it may not always matter who wins: Clinton vs. Trump...

For one last desperate attempt after what is a two and half month of comatose from a head bang, many Americans pinch themselves, only to realise it's no dream (nightmare). The 45th President of the US is for real, as he takes his oath to never grab again while trading in his sleek executive jet for 'Hair' Force One. And no, he doesn't use 'alternative facts' about the massive attendance at his inauguration. He probably refers to the massive protests. As comedian Aziz Ansari says just a day later on NBC's *Saturday Night Live* (SNL) "It was a whole gender which protested". Aziz adds his concerns of what Mr. President may think seeing a brown Muslim making fun of him.

There are now two mandatory tasks every morning for the average American - check the weather forecast and check Donald Trump's tweets. The former speaks of the mercury, the latter of the mercurial.

This kicks off a barrage of all things happening in two's: The President makes two tasks mandatory for himself first thing in the morning - send his tweets AFTER watching Alec Baldwin's impersonation of the President on *SNL*. The White House starts to cope with the double dunk shock of contrasts - Trump against Truman and Melania against Michelle. Hillary's double pain - not winning the presidency and losing to Trump. In addition to a Press Secretary, the White House now may contemplate having a Twitter Secretary. The last two Republican administrations each have a Donald for a headache - Donald Trump and Donald Rumsfeld. Finally, Walt Disney is back with 'Donald and Mickey' (Trump and Pence) cleaning up the 'swamp'.

No wait, one more! There are two correlations between Bangladesh and Trump's USA. Bangladesh has SIM registration, USA has MUSLIM registration. Bangladesh moves up a notch in the Global Peace Index, thanks to the US slipping a notch from Trump's presidency.

And I don't speak lightly in my reference to peace. Take the instance with the Middle East. The US Embassy is moving from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The new Pentagon boss is the hard liner James Mattis nicknamed Mad Dog and the Middle East reads from the right to the left where 'Mad Dog', read right to left, is 'God Dam'...

On the home front as the Tweeter-in-Chief Donald Trump and the role 'model' Third Lady Melania Trump move into the White House, there is the first breach in a pre-campaign promise. It's the promise of the anti-Trump voter. There is no mass exodus of anti-Trump Americans into Canada. Perhaps their exploratory trips discouraged many after seeing occupied Toronto, aka, *Begum Para*. Not to mention their learning of the stringent immigration laws of that country.

There is a breach in the pro-Trump voter camp too as many throng to the inauguration while opting to buy cheaper 'Make America Great Again' caps made in China.

All said and done, US politics has been radicalised by that of the Third World. With Donald, in many ways as comical as the comic character Donald Duck, we wait and see. What will be his lie-gacy? The world has no choice but to give him a chance. Let's hope America's new slogan doesn't become 'Make America Regret Again'...

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US withdrawal from TPP: should Bangladesh be elated?

MD. ABDUL HANNAN

AS expected, US President Donald Trump scrapped the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) by an executive order just after taking over as new president. Interestingly, Zahid Hussain, World Bank economist stationed in Dhaka, suggested in an interview with *The Daily Star*, "If the TPP is not signed it will be a piece of good news for Bangladesh. But it is not good news for world trade because it will weaken the foundation of the multilateral trading system". Similar observations can also be found in the press and media. The question is: is the decision of the US administration indeed good for Bangladesh? The remarks made by WB economist have two interesting elements: i) 'not signing the TPP will be good news for Bangladesh' and ii) 'MTS (Multilateral Trading System) will be weakened'.

In the post-war global order, the big powers led by US created GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade). In January 1995, WTO was established as a rule based organisation for the MTS for fully liberalised and globalised trade.

Brazil, India, China and other developing countries made huge strides benefitting from the Special and Differential preferential treatment offered to developing countries under WTO. In the wake of the last global economic downturn, the US and others have started arguing that the emerging economies (BRICS countries) have grown more rapidly than the rest of the world (though these economies have also been experiencing slowing down). And, the emerging economies should make 'commensurate contributions to the liberalisation of world trade'. Conversely, emerging economies argued that they are still developing countries. They need to be shielded through appropriate 'Special and Differential Treatment' and 'Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM)' for their interests under WTO.

The big players, including the US, couldn't make any headway trying to promote their interests in the negotiations in WTO. Essentially, there has been no substantive progress in the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) negotiations. In fact, critics suggest DDA a 'dead round'.

In recent years, some founding leaders created strategic Regional Trading arrangement - TPP - undermining the existing universal Multilateral Trading System created by them in 1995. Among developing countries and LDCs, TPP have been widely considered a parallel mechanism of MTS



Donald Trump signs an executive order withdrawing the US from the Trans-Pacific Partnership. PHOTO: AFP

and manifestation of 'protectionism' and against globalisation.

WTO Director General, Mr. Roberto Azavedo, at the joint annual meeting of WB and IMF in Washington last October urged for "new globalisation push" against the "growing threats of protectionism".

TPP, either signed by the US or otherwise, will not serve the interest of countries like Bangladesh. The US, during DDA negotiations, was not found fully sensitive towards the interests of LDCs, particularly duty-free-quota-free (DFQF) market access to the US.

Both Republican and Democratic administrations did not find much interest in giving equal treatment to all LDCs while offering preferential market access to the US. They maintained a clear African LDCs favoured package like African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

Scrapping of TPP can definitely not be considered as weakening of the MTS. Twelve member states of TPP would together represent 40 percent of world trade. LDC groups represent merely 1 percent of world trade. With the US withdrawal from TPP, countries like Bangladesh cannot rejoice. White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer already stated, "This executive action ushers in a new era of US trade policy in which the Trump adminis-

tration will pursue bilateral trade opportunities with allies around the globe", which is a clear manifestation of a protectionist stance. Trump did not indicate that his administration would give special attention to LDCs and help their mainstreaming into the MTS and their early graduation. And there is no mention that DDA should be concluded on a fast track basis.

Interestingly, some members of BGMEA were found very relieved as Vietnam will be directly affected by the scrapping of TPP by the US. As a member, Vietnam might be genuinely concerned. But Vietnam is a reality for Bangladesh. TPP or not, it will continue to grow fast and will take the bigger pie of the US market for garments with its consistent open door and export led policies attracting phenomenal growth of FDI, which is a dream for any LDC. On the other hand, Bangladesh's graduation to Middle Income Country from LDC itself will be a big challenge. Bangladesh cannot continue with a duty-free-quota-free market access for long. It has to find its way to be competitive. And, BGMEA is expected to be prepared for diversifying tariff lines and markets with much required efficiency and compliances.

Bangladesh, as a member of the LDCs

bloc has immensely benefited from the MTS. Among all LDCs, it fully exploited the preferential regime of MTS and built a phenomenal garments and textile sector, created millions of jobs and thus reduced poverty and made the poor and women empowered. Another stunning success is the pharmaceutical sector. Bangladesh took the full benefit of TRIPS flexibility for pharma products under WTO. Definitely, the government played a catalytic role in making the garments and pharma products globally competitive. And, the economy has now visibly turned around with a positive image.

Given the ground realities and emerging global trading scenario, Bangladesh should continue its engagements being fully committed to MTS. We should also engage with the new US administration with well-researched statistics and arguments, proving how the suspension of GSP facilities has negatively impacted Bangladesh and that the US should revisit the GSP issue for Bangladesh. Trade bodies should also be immediately forthcoming in finding innovative ways to buttress the government's engagement with the US administration.

The writer is a former Ambassador. Email: md.a.hannan@gmail.com

QUOTABLE Quote



WALTER BENJAMIN
GERMAN JEWISH PHILOSOPHER, CULTURAL CRITIC AND ESSAYIST

There is no document of civilization that is not at the same time a document of barbarism.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- Nasser's successor
 - Chess side
 - Historic period
 - Showed over
 - Marilyn's real name
 - Not oblivious
 - Cold showers?
 - Worker, for one
 - Spreading tree
 - Makes a home
 - "How -- love thee?"
 - Newsman Jim
 - March 14, to math fans
 - Business goal
 - Topper
 - Lasses
 - Iron source
 - Easter item
 - Threatening sounds
 - Frat party costumes
 - Key
 - "Hello" singer
 - "Crazy" singer
 - Eggnog server
- DOWN**
- Felt
 - Artemis' twin
 - Moolah
 - High point
 - 1966 Frank Sinatra hit
 - Lingerie item
 - Writer Wallace
 - Fit for farming
 - Calling
 - Dandling spots
 - Garden activity
 - Cynical snort
 - Give it a go
 - Peas' place
 - Eastern temple
 - Manipulated, as an election
 - Blue great -- Wolf
 - Dahl of films
 - Checked out
 - Rock genre
 - Ibsen's home
 - Totality
 - Spot

BEETLE BAILEY



YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

ETHAN REACT
NIECE ARMOR
DEARS PROSE
REST ANTE
PATS SETS
EBB SPLITUP
AURAL SCENE
STERILE RIG
AMMO ACTS
RAKE USMA
OMERIT KILLOS
MERIT IGLTS
ESSAY POSTS

BABY BLUES

