

HEAVYWEIGHT PUNCH BY A PERCEIVED LIGHTWEIGHT!

PLEASURE IS ALL MINE



SHAH HUSAIN IMAM

PLAYING against India on its home ground, where they had inflicted series defeats on New Zealand and England, was like pushing a boulder up a steep mountain top. But we made it look like we were almost there making light of the uphill task with some entertaining, fighting cricket.



Bangladesh's captain Mushfiqur Rahim celebrates his century on the fourth day of a solo Test match between India and Bangladesh at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium on February 12, 2017. PHOTO: NOAH SEELAM/AFP

A Bangladesh win at Hyderabad was perhaps the remotest in any cricket professional's mind. So we thought a draw would be a win for Bangladesh. And now, we are saying that despite the defeat, our gains have been substantial. We said that after the series debacle against New Zealand, we are saying it again after the one-off against India.

After 17 years of playing Test cricket, yes, we have moved from 3-4 days in a Test match to 5 days; yes, we are 'certified' as having graduated from 'an improving side' to 'an improved side'. But why—after brilliant individual flashes signalling an amazing comeback or creating opportunities for moving past the opponent in a subsequent session—does our grip on the proceedings invariably slip back to our opponent? This is a familiar story of our failing to convert breakthroughs into an illumined team success.

In the modern era, I take the view, hopefully resonating with the reader, that it is melodramatic nonsense to be consoling ourselves with the decades having been taken by India or New Zealand to come to the stage that they have; and we are only 17 years into Tests. Yet, in those one and a half decades, we have played very few Test matches.

What could be a more propitious time for the news that the BCB has almost confirmed a deal with South African legend Jonty Rhodes to be our fielding consultant. Richard Halsall is the current fielding coach of

Bangladesh and with Jonty an important value addition to the fielding side is getting underway. Also, former Indian left arm spinner Sunil Joshi is all set to join as the spin bowling consultant. We already have Courtney Walsh mentoring the pace department.

A full measure of logistical and training support mechanism is being put in place. This obligates the BCB, BKSP and the whole lot of the playing community to put their shoulders to the wheel and deliver the goods.

The crystallised view of cricket professionals is that we should by all means avoid making a mess of team selections for all formats of the game, more so in Test cricket. We shall have to groom, develop, evolve and stick with two clear-cut national teams, one for the Tests and the other for the

shorter versions of the game.

Rather than last minute scrounging for cobbling a loosely knit team flaccid at the edges we must have self-contained combinations in battle-ready condition. The tested and tried ones are 5-6 in number, so that they may be constants. It is the remainder equal number with whom we experiment too much adding a soft belly to the team fielded. If the players are on the learning curve, so too are the managers.

Of course, there should be a quality spare capacity to cover contingencies like injuries which are increasingly becoming a part of the high-voltage competitive cricket scenarios.

The supply chain of domestic cricketers revolves around the first class matches. This is for the longer version of the game which must not be

allowed to be subsumed by national cricket. Thankfully, these are having a momentum of their own lately, a trend that needs to be encouraged to boost national cricket like in the case of top cricketing nations.

Bangladesh was resisting the kiss of death on the borderline of the fourth session on the fifth day of the Hyderabad Test. An Indian commentator boomed at the curtains on Bangladesh's innings with a clear hint of circumspection and admiration. "It is a hard-fought win," as Bangladesh resisted outright capitulation with grit, determination and gumption in the face of a monumental chasing target.

In the first place, India's mammoth total was not so much a reflection of their batting prowess as it was that of our below-par bowling and fielding

performances. Captain Mushfiqur Rahim pointed it out risking a measure of self-criticism with that happening under his charge. His own performance left little to be desired.

The senior batsmen failed to build partnerships after having started well to reach 20-plus runs barring, of course, a few notable exceptions. In matters of defence, an important tactic for a team fighting to draw a match, Kamrul set an example. A relatively newcomer as a bowler and a tail-ender batsman he could withstand 70 balls while some of his seniors crumbled under short bursts.

This is not to take away the credit from our batsmen like Shakib, Mushfiqur, Soumya, Mahmudullah, Mehedi, Mominul and Sabbir. They occupied the crease for varying long spells making the Indian bowling look for those stretches toothless. Likewise, in general, several of their batsmen played our bowlers with a devastating effect to amass that daunting total.

On balance, Hyderabad Test must go down as an effective public relations event. Even as a commercial success, Indian organisers had been chary about crowd-pulling potential of matches against Bangladesh. Now that our brand of fighting and entertaining cricket has won admirers in India, we can only hope that the jinx is broken opening the way for serious bilateral series between India and Bangladesh.

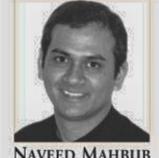
On a final note, we have to take the negatives as seriously as the positives. That said, you cannot help feeling that India plays cricket more as a culture than perhaps as a game. In a game it is like hop-step-and-jump where you leave a footmark on the sand to be measured with a tape as a mark of progress or regression. When cricket is played as a culture, you expect a wholehearted, charged participation in it. And, you focus on each ball to yield a result, taking the contest between the bat and the ball to an entirely new height of tension and anticipation. The animation is incomparable.

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No love lost

HUMOROUSLY YOURS



NAVEED MAHUB

FEBRUARY is like a traffic light – signalling us to slow down and stop. It starts with the green of picnics, then the orange of Pohela Falgun (this year the TSC area somehow looked like Donald Trump) and finally the red of Valentine's. And you bet your Ascot that I

Trump tweets: "The real scandal here is that classified information is illegally given out by 'intelligence' like candy. Very un-American!" True, as it is very un-Bangladeshi to leak out SSC questions like jhaal muri.

celebrate Valentine's – on February 15 when everything is back to being priced within the sanity range. I do have to admit that every year around this time, I seriously contemplate getting into the floral business.

The days of love letters are gone, but some are scrambling to get to a semblance of penmanship or at least legibility – doctors, mandated by the judiciary branch. The judiciary branch of another country shoots down a travel ban. Mr Trump gets a rude awakening that the powers of the POTUS come with not JUST a cheque, but also with a balance.

"See you in court!" says Trump to the indomitable judges. Uhm! I thought these judges ARE in court all day anyway. It's like a golfer like me whose handicap is his handicap, threatening Siddikur Rahman to a duel on the Kurmitola golf course. Maybe these judges can entertain a Bangladeshi lawsuit against the unsueable World Bank...

Trump is no man to bow out without a fight. In fact we're seeing a presidential version of his punching down the commentator at the WWF wrestling match. He fights on, with just about everything in sight – the Mexican President, the



Australian PM (of all the people) and then Nordstrom, which probably still carries MIB products. That's not Men in Black, but Made in Bangladesh. But I thought Mr Trump is a businessman who understands numbers and that the Ivanka line was plain not selling at Nordstrom. I guess, there are many things associated with the name 'Trump' which are finding themselves hard to sell...

Speaking of Ivanka, she creates a storm by sitting in the Presidential seat of the Oval Office with President Donald Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau standing on both sides (even she giggles while being next to the hunky Trudeau). Well, that's some 'take your

daughter to work day' as the criticisms pour in. Aha! Maybe that's the true picture of who's running the show at the White House.

But Ivanka, I'm completely fine with you sitting in the President's seat at the Oval Office with Donald Trump standing next to you. I once had my two-year-old daughter sit on the comedian's stool on stage while I stood next to her and performed stand-up comedy (at a non-alcohol venue) in California. After all, Donald Trump and I are both in the same business – comedy...

Quite the opposite of Valentine's, eh? No love lost. The US Secretary of Education is confirmed with the vote of Mike Pence to break a tie, thus setting a new passing grade for the US education

system. Wonder if she has anything to do with the ever oscillating issue of VAT on English medium schools in Bangladesh.

There is also no love lost between Trump and the intelligence community. Trump tweets: "The real scandal here is that classified information is illegally given out by 'intelligence' like candy. Very un-American!" True, as it is very un-Bangladeshi to leak out SSC questions like *jhaal muri*.

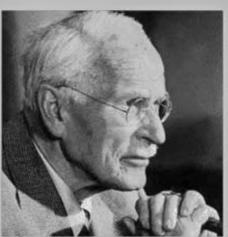
No love lost with Michael Flynn as the shortest serving National Security Advisor's successor could be retired General and former CIA Director David Petraeus. A great choice – 37 years of highly decorated military career and two years in probation for sharing classified information with his secret lover while the Director of CIA.

No love lost with the 'fake news' folks as Trump tweets: "...@MSNBC & @CNN are unwatchable. @foxandfriends is great!"

What falls below the love radar is that France's Peugeot buys India's iconic Ambassador for just 12 million dollars (Make France Great Again with the voluptuous Ambassador) and that a Hitler double is seen (and later arrested) around his birth place in Austria (are we sure he doesn't look orange and have blonde hair?). But what does NOT fall below the radar is my biggest fear of Donald Trump being impeached and his then losing his presidency which in turn will put us comedians out of business. Mike Pence will be as scary but not as funny.

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

QUOTABLE Quote

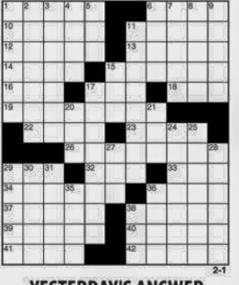


CARL JUNG
SWISS PSYCHIATRIST AND PSYCHOANALYST WHO FOUNDED ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Your vision will become clear only when you look inside your heart; who looks outside dreams; who looks inside awakens.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| ACROSS | 33 Ump's cry | 9 Put up |
| 1 California county | 34 Company firer | 11 Handy man's staple |
| 6 Forest danger | 36 Fizzy quaff | 15 Army address |
| 10 Green hue | 37 Unimportant | 17 African desert |
| 11 Kitchen gadget | 38 Crime outing | 20 Snapshot |
| 12 Was frugal | 39 Suspect's story | 21 Hit show letters |
| 13 Bring together | 40 Operative | 24 Highway cop |
| 14 Tag sale label | 41 Takes in | 25 Pupil |
| 15 Like vistas | 42 Bakery buys | 27 Harry's friend |
| 16 Mamie's mate | | 28 Sets off |
| 17 Young fox | | 29 Eastern monks |
| 18 Acquire | DOWN | 30 Banish |
| 19 Belts, plugs, wiper blades, etc. | 1 Tiled work | 31 Aladdin's aide |
| 22 Finger feature | 2 Nome native | 35 Unruly groups |
| 23 Liberal study | 3 European resort | 36 Sweeping story |
| 26 Kin of garages | 4 Singer Burl | 38 Jazz fan |
| 29 Chair part | 5 Homer's neighbor | |
| 32 Garden tool | 6 Excellent | |
| | 7 Cake cover | |
| | 8 Knot anew | |



YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

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

BEETLE BAILEY



by Mort Walker



BABY BLUES



by Kirkman & Scott

