

2030 AGENDA

Where do we stand today?



SHAMSUL ALAM

THE 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development were adopted on September 25, 2015 at the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly. The 2030 Agenda is a plan of action emphasising on the core principles of peace, people, planet, prosperity and partnership, which seeks to strengthen universal peace, prosperity and freedom. Eradicating poverty, including extreme poverty, has been recognised as the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. During the coming fifteen years, with these new goals that universally apply to all, countries will mobilise efforts to end all forms of poverty through accelerated growth, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind.

In Bangladesh, the implementation of the 7th Five Year Plan (FYP) 2016-2020 and SDGs have started concomitantly. Both the documents share the same core objectives like empowering people, ensuring prosperity, encouraging innovation, advancing peace, strengthening partnership, protecting the planet. The 7th FYP (2016-2020) has targeted an average of 7.4 percent annual GDP growth per year, which is higher than the targeted 7 percent for least developed countries under the SDGs. A total of 15 goals (88

percent) are found to be fully aligned, thematically, with the 7th FYP (National Planning Tool for socio-economic development), while only Goal 16 and 17 (12 percent) are partially aligned. A total of 58 SDG targets (34 percent) are fully aligned with the 7th FYP targets, while 11 SDG targets (7 percent) have no relevance to Bangladesh.

The government of Bangladesh has formed a high-level inter-ministerial SDG Implementation and Monitoring Committee. An office of Principal Coordinator for SDG Affairs has been established in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) to coordinate and facilitate the overall implementation and monitoring of SDGs. Secretaries of 16 key ministries are members of the committee and are working closely with the Principal Coordinator. The General Economics Division (GED) of Bangladesh Planning Commission is the secretariat for the committee to coordinate the implementation at policy level, along with monitoring and reporting the SDG attainment status of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has done the mapping of ministries/divisions by SDG targets (who is to do what in terms of targets) identifying 40 ministries/divisions, including the PMO and Cabinet Division as the lead entity to implement 162 targets of SDGs (7 not relevant for Bangladesh). Line ministries have been asked to prepare their SDG Implementation Action Plan by March 2017. Ministries/divisions will identify the actions or interventions to achieve the SDG targets in conformity with the 7th FYP. Further, ministries/divisions will comply with the Action Plans by preparing

possible actions/interventions during and beyond the 7th FYP until 2030.

Finally, GED is preparing the Action Plan to Implement SDGs through Five Year Plans, in consultation with all the relevant ministries and divisions. This will come out as a published document by mid-May this year.

A preliminary data gap analysis for monitoring SDGs has already been conducted by the General Economics Division (GED) in cooperation with the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. Data Gap Analysis found that data on only 70 indicators are available (out

of 230) in the existing data generating system of Bangladesh and 108 can be generated by modifying the existing census (from aggregation to disaggregation), survey, MIS, etc. Some of these 70 indicators for which data is available are also lagging behind, in cases by even up to five years. A handbook on data gap analysis has already been published by GED, identifying areas of data gap. On the basis of the findings of SDG Data Gap Analysis, the SDG Monitoring Framework is being prepared. Bangladesh National Statistical Agency (BBS) has started

data mining/generating for some important indicators.

NGOs, CSOs, Development Partners (DPs), private sectors and the media have been consulted to ensure their involvement in SDG implementation. Thematic and goal-wise consultations with stakeholders from private sector along with DPs have been carried out regarding the action plan and monitoring framework. The development partners of Bangladesh have also been requested to align their country strategies within the framework of the SDG targets relevant for Bangladesh.

SDGs and their associated targets would be reflected in ministries' annual work plans as well as in Annual Performance Agreement (APA) within ministries.

To facilitate the results based monitoring system within the government, a macro-level data repository system (SDG Tracker) is being developed by Access to Information (a2i) Project at PMO to facilitate GED. An SDG tracker will be established with the help of a2i of PMO to analyse the data for tracking and evaluating the status of SDG attainment. GED has also started to prepare the SDGs Needs Assessment and Costing exercise for Bangladesh, to estimate the resources needed for achieving SDGs in Bangladesh by 2030 (*USD 3-5 trillion would be required annually throughout the world*). The study is underway and is expected to be finalised in April and will also be published by mid-May this year.

All-out efforts for implementing SDGs are underway. We aspire to be an outstanding performer to attain the SDGs, as we did in the case of MDGs.

Bangladesh will participate in submitting the upcoming report, where the focus will be on where we are in terms of implementing Agenda 2030, to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) of UN in July 2017. Forty countries in the world have expressed their willingness to present the voluntary National Reviews in 2017 -- Bangladesh being one of them.



PHOTO: UNESCO

Time to sever ties with Pyongyang

Asean should take stock of befriending a nation that serves up murder and missiles



JUNE H. L. WONG

SERVES North Korea right. Its Supreme Leader Kim Jong-nam wanted his half-brother dead and his lackeys decided to do the dastardly deed in Malaysia.

Analysts have surmised Malaysia was chosen over Macau and Singapore – places Kim Jong-nam was also known to frequent – because it posed the least political and economic risk to North Korea.

Pyongyang must have also taken into consideration the relaxed and friendly ties between the two countries where its citizens could go in and out without visas and scrutiny.

So when Jong-nam was poisoned at Kuala Lumpur International Airport 2 on February 13, Pyongyang most likely expected unsuspecting Malaysia to believe a man named Kim Chol died of a heart attack and, since he had a diplomatic passport, dutifully release the body to the North Korean Embassy. End of story.

As it turned out, even the most well-laid plans can go awry and they certainly did for the North Koreans. A day later, a Reuters report, quoting US and South Korean government sources, announced to the world Jong-nam's strange, sudden death and the whole thing unravelled.

After that, Malaysian authorities couldn't just let it go. By miscalculating badly, Jong-un brought massive world attention on himself and his insanely run nation.

Jong-nam's assassination by a swipe of nerve poison is so surreal that it could be the stuff of Hollywood movies. And it actually is.

In the 2014 comedy, *The Interview*, two American TV talk show hosts, played by Seth Rogan and James Franco, get an exclusive invitation to interview Jong-un. The CIA gets wind of it and enlists the two to assassinate him with a fast-acting poison on a medical plaster to be administered by a handshake!

Pyongyang found the movie so offensive, it threatened "merciless retaliation" against the

US. But maybe they also found inspiration in the modus operandi.

Even before Jong-nam's sensational murder, there was little good news about North Korea. It has long made a mockery of its official name as the "Democratic People's Republic of Korea". This is a totalitarian hermit kingdom ruled by three generations of a dynastic family that has gotten more brutal and psychotic with each successor to the "throne".

The Kims have been obsessed with building military might over feeding their brainwashed subjects. As a result, famine and starvation has

Shocking as it was, since those killings involved North Korean citizens and took place on "home ground", the rest of the world shrugged off the whole unsavoury episode and did nothing.

But North Korea has spilled blood outside its borders. Pyongyang was held responsible for the attempted assassination of South Korean president Chun Doo-hwan during his official visit to Yangon, Myanmar, in October 1983 which killed 21 people, including four of his Cabinet ministers, and wounded 46 others.

In November 1987, Pyongyang ordered the bombing of Korea Airlines Flight 858 which was flying from Baghdad to Seoul in an attempt to destabilise South Korea and disrupt the 1988 Olympic Games.

After each deadly episode, there was fury and condemnation. Yangon suspended diplomatic ties for a while but these were resumed to the extent Myanmar and North Korea were considered "secret allies" by the United States.

Malaysia-North Korea relations may have soured considerably but in all likelihood, bilateral ties would normalise after some time; already media interest in Jong-nam's murder is winding down. His body will have to be eventually returned to North Korea and Malaysians stuck in Pyongyang will be allowed to leave.

But should we be so forgiving even though there were no Malaysian casualties in this incident?

The assassination should be viewed in relation to what's currently happening on the Korean Peninsula. For almost two decades since 1999, no diplomacy and international sanctions have been able to derail North Korea's pursuit of its nuclear weapons programme. When Jong-un took over in 2011, he made no bones that his "first, second and third" priorities were to strengthen his military. By 2016, he was able to test-fire dozens of missiles with possible nuclear warhead capability from mobile launches and submarines. The latest test on March 6 with four long-range missiles fired into the sea, just 300 km off the Japan's northwest coast, has spooked Tokyo, angered Seoul and even rattled Beijing.

The situation is further complicated by Seoul hurriedly agreeing to the US installing its Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) anti-missile system in South Korea. That has not gone down well with Beijing and Moscow.

As tensions escalate, putting North Korea and the US and its allies on a collision path, what should Malaysia and the rest of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations do?

All 10 members of Asean have long had formal diplomatic ties with Pyongyang, some more friendly than others, and the region ranks behind only China in economic importance for North Korea, according to the *South China Morning Post* which describes the number of North Korean diplomats in the region as "inordinate".

Jong-nam's murder has exposed how Pyongyang had exploited Asean's "relaxed diplomatic policy to conduct clandestine activities in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore," says SCMP.

This included North Korean intelligence agents using a front company, Glocom,

with its office in the heart of Kuala Lumpur to sell battlefield radio equipment, in violation of UN sanctions.

The world waits to see how pugnacious President Donald Trump will handle North Korea. But Malaysia and the rest of Asean must also act and not go back to status quo because North Korea is not an East Asian problem for only the US, China, South Korea and Japan to tackle. As Albert Einstein warned, "The world is in greater peril from those who tolerate or encourage evil than from those who actually commit it."

So Asean should stop being so nice and start dismantling Pyongyang's spy nests in their midst. No amount of economic benefits can justify a bilateral relationship with a paranoid nation led by a murderous megalomaniac.

The writer is the former group chief editor of The Star Media Group, Malaysia.

This is a series of columns on global affairs written by top editors and columnists from members of the Asia News Network and published in newspapers and websites across the region.

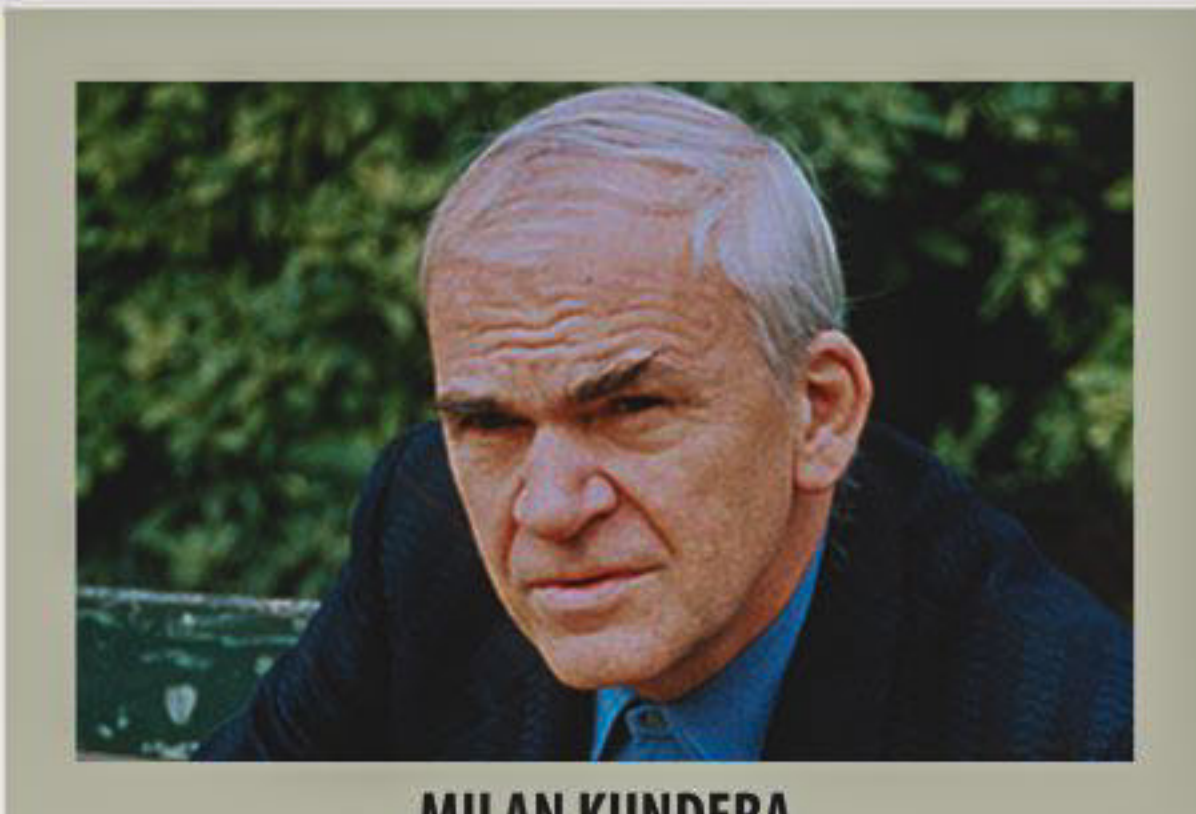


been a recurring feature. In the 1980s, *The Star* newspaper started a North Korean Famine Fund that raised a few million ringgit from sympathetic Malaysians.

Another devastating famine struck from 1993 to 1999 which the United Nations says killed an estimated two million people. The World Food Programme (WFP) was allowed entry in 1995 and never left. Two of the 11 Malaysians who managed to return from North Korea after Pyongyang's decision to bar Malaysians from leaving the country, were working for WFP.

Then there was the horrifying news of how Jong-un executed his uncle by marriage, Jang Song-thaek, and his entire family, including his son Yong-chol, who was recalled as the ambassador to Malaysia in December 2013.

QUOTABLE Quote

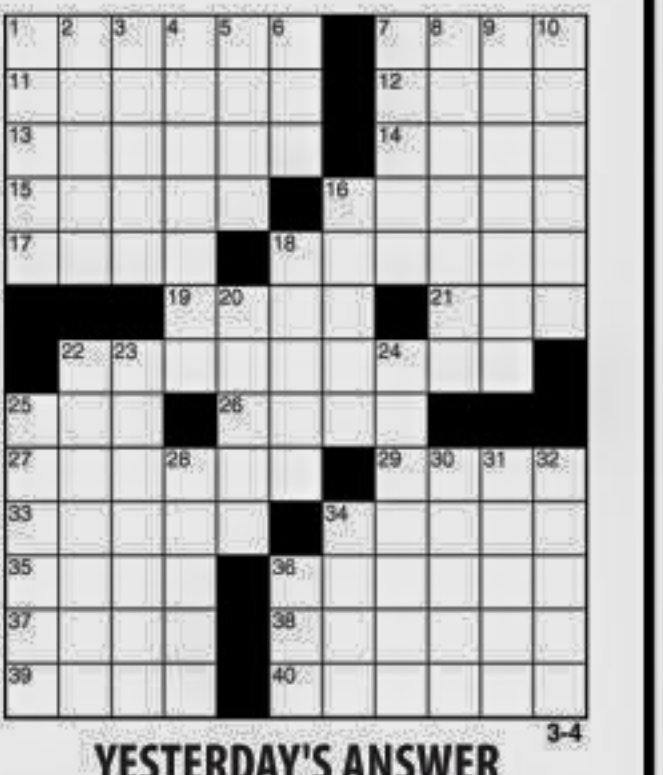


MILAN KUNDERA
CZECH-BORN FRENCH WRITER

Chance and chance alone has a message for us. Everything that occurs out of necessity, everything expected, repeated day in and day out, is mute. Only chance can speak to us.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Chinese food veggie
 - 7 Christmas song
 - 11 Entertain
 - 12 Last Stuart ruler
 - 13 Gives an address
 - 14 Raw numbers
 - 15 Singing voice, in slang
 - 16 Nev. neighbor
 - 17 Spotted
 - 18 Buck up
 - 19 Blue hue
 - 21 Cincinnati player
 - 22 Unpretentious
 - 25 -- Jacinto
 - 26 On this spot
- DOWN**
- 27 Pamplona pals
 - 29 Ignoble
 - 33 Casual eateries
 - 34 Swift
 - 35 Mob event
 - 36 Jacket feature
 - 37 Stocking shade
 - 38 Without delay
 - 39 Humid
 - 40 Sacred river of India
 - 6 -- Plains
 - 7 Tennis star Rafael
 - 8 Just for fun
 - 9 Lures
 - 10 Paged (through)
 - 16 Tone
 - 18 Bank fixtures
 - 20 Cultural spirit
 - 22 Reggae's birthplace
 - 23 Unvarying
 - 24 Syria neighbor
 - 25 Blessed
 - 28 Outfit
 - 30 Copying
 - 31 Following
 - 32 Bound
 - 34 Singer Coolidge
 - 36 Drop behind



YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

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

NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY
The First Private University in Bangladesh

TENDER NOTICE

Tender No. NSU/17-03

North South University is inviting sealed offer from the bona fide / reputed organization / distributors / business partners / agents for supplying equipment, reagent for NSU Genome Research Institute (NGRI).

Lot No.	Items	Quantity
1.	Equipment and accessories for Genomics and molecular biology research.	19 items
2.	Reagents for Genome lab.	30 items
3.	Computer and Printer.	7 nos.

Interested bidders may collect a schedule of tender from the Southeast Bank Ltd. Bashundhara Branch, Dhaka from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on all working days till **March 30, 2017** by paying the non-refundable amount of Taka 2,000.00 (Two Thousand) in cash for the schedule.

The bidders must submit **earnest money @ 2.5%** of the quoted price in the form of Pay-Order issued from any scheduled bank drawn in favor of North South University along with their offer. The sealed offer must be submitted on **April 02, 2017 by 2.00 p.m.** at the office of the undersigned. The offers will be opened at 2:15 p.m. on the same day. Representatives of the participating bidders may remain present at the time of opening the bids. NSU authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without showing any reason.

Director, Administration
NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY
Bashundhara, Dhaka-1229
Phone: +88-02-55668200, Ext. 1204 & 1213
Fax: +88-02-55668202

www.northsouth.edu