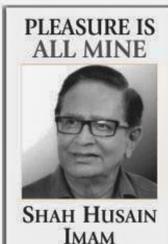


Missing Mustafizur



SHAH HUSAIN IMAM

PLEASURE IS ALL MINE

THE IPL is nearing a climactic phase. Yet, it holds little excitement and appeal for Bangladeshis in general. Shakib, a world-class all-rounder, more or less a regular feature on the Kolkata franchise, has had just one outing for the Knight Riders. And, Mustafizur Rahman, once called a 'revelation' from Bangladesh, lovingly nicknamed Fizz, has been 'benched' by Sunrisers Hyderabad after playing just once.

Well, that single performance of his in the current edition of the IPL was disastrous – I would like to add – by Fizz's standards. He gave away 19 runs in his first over, 11 runs in the second and four in four balls in a final match deciding over.

If his conceding that many runs in the first over was held against him, one has to only cite 26 runs scored off Umesh Yadav's over, let alone 17 or so runs milked off Henriques or quite a few other

bowlers. Yet their skipper or management kept faith with them.

How could the management of the Sunrisers Hyderabad be oblivious of the fact that Mustafiz has to his credit, after the first year of his appearance in international cricket, two top accolades? Last year, the IPL and this year the ICC adjudged him as 'the emerging cricketer' of the series and the world at large respectively.

Since his return from injury in August 2015 Mustafiz's performance graph has been on a decline. Although he may be down, he surely is not out of depth or devoid of prowess to build on his repertoire. Statistics bear this out. In ODIs against New Zealand and Sri Lanka his average has been 23.5 and 28.5 per wicket, respectively. In Tests against Sri Lanka the average worked out to 27.5 per wicket.

These are quite good numbers but they pale in comparison with the spectacular 12.34 and 14.5 averages he had recorded in ODIs and Tests prior to his lengthy lay-off.

The veteran of many injuries, Mashrafe Mortaza, having an insight into world cricket, has correctly diagnosed Mustafiz's

problem. On the highly competitive cricketing circuits there are astute analysts watching over extraordinary emerging cricketers to read into their strengths and weaknesses. Then they come up with solutions for a crack at one with bowling wizardry.

Back to the IPL sidelining Fizz so far, well, there were Tom Moody and Muttiah Muralitharan as Sunrisers Hyderabad bowling coaches! They could give Fizz tips and let him be taken on board for a few more games in the IPL with his potential for nail-hitting yorkers. Of course, in the razzle-dazzle of cricketing commercialism different equations may be brought into play with so many players to choose from.

It is not an overstatement to say that every time the Sunrisers Hyderabad were scheduled to play, Bangladesh's interest would centre on one question: Is Mustafizur playing in this game? And, they would scan sports pages of newspapers, watch TV channels, and follow pre-game expert discussions to find an answer to that million dollar question. Such is the craze for the wonder boy that they would have stared at the stamp-sized photo serial on the TV screen

to see if the darling of Bangladesh cricket and the toast of Sussex team, the first to be beholden to Mustafiz, is going to feature in the IPL series at all.

Mustafiz in action has been a delight to see and cherish. His effortless bowling action minus any hint of a grimace or a grunt, just before delivering a ball and his look-what-I-have-done chuckle before a scuttled wicket or sharp catch off his bowling, has been a treat to watch.

If there are any issues with his rhythm, line, length, pace and variations they can be overcome with practice under the guidance of Courtney Walsh. Stepping out of the lap of Satkhira, grooming under the nature's wings and the smell of the soil stuck with him, his kind of talent is inherently sustainable. After having mastered his art of bowling guiles, he has a long way to go reinventing himself and conquering the wiles of top batsmen of the world. For the time being, as the reputed Australian cricketer and ubiquitous commentator Dean Jones has said, Mustafiz would do well to add eight more kg to his bodyweight.

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Who is Daddy's Girl?



NAVEED MAHBUB

HUMOROUSLY YOURS

LET'S face it, if there is anyone we love the most, it's ourselves. It is probably the biggest waste of human cells to have a pair of ears – just one would have sufficed. I mean, am I really listening to you when you are going on and on talking about your child? Remember the embarrassing moment when your mom told you (when you were a kid) with all the guests in the living room, "Why don't you sing your ABCs to all your aunts?"

"Nooooo!!!!"

Of course, the assembled aunts are too polite to say this out loud, but their minds are groaning, telling their whole bodies to brace for the most boring concert for the next longest three minutes. With our blind love for our broods, we fail to realise that other parents don't quite share that same love for our kids.

And so, the tormenting recitation starts, "A-B-C-D-E-F-G..."

The fake enthusiasm and looks of admiration deserve instant Oscars. Once done, all clap, "Yea! That was beautiful!"

Done. Well, not quite. There is one champion hypocrite (we are all hypocrites) who goes, "That was wonderful! How about another song?"

"Noooooooo!!!! We will kill you!!!" This is the Google Translation of the collective grimace of all the other aunts. Of course, the proud parent continues to be blind, "Now sing Jack and Jill – see auntie wants to hear another one."

You see, we love our own kids and everybody else's spouses. The age old theory transcends into the digital age too. Just put a picture of your kid on Facebook and you will get struggled comments like "Aw! How cute!", "Adorable!", "So sweet!" and 16 'Like's. Put up your wife's picture and the comments will flood in: "She's gorgeous!", "You lucky dog!" Not to mention 1,800 'Like's and 274 shares.

Donald Trump takes this to the next level as he says, "If Ivanka wasn't my daughter, perhaps I'd be dating her."

As a father of two daughters myself, I will not go that far, but I actually do hide behind a curtain when my five year old daughter snatches the microphone at a wedding ceremony to sing a nursery rhyme, much to the annoyance of a thousand people as I, the proud father, imbibe in the beauty of her on stage from my hiding while a thousand pair of eyes search the room to see where the irresponsible parent is, not coming to THEIR rescue.

I can however vouch for the blind love and admiration of the daughter for her father in the reverse direction. My older daughter has no qualms filling up her school form with 'Comedian' as the 'Occupation of Father'.

The same blind love prompts the First Daughter to emphatically claim at the W20 Women's Summit that her father is a "tremendous champion of supporting families". The audience jeers but her gracious host Angela Merkel perfectly masks any reaction she may have had at that moment, the same way we, as students, once did when our teacher was yelling at us with the fly of his trousers open. Then again, perhaps the definition of being a 'champion' is downing a few Tic Tacs just in case an opportunity needs to be 'grabbed'. Any other definition of 'champion' is totally fake news.

But the German Chancellor sees beyond the boos and the hisses as she carefully studies the picture of Ivanka sitting behind the desk at the Oval Office with her dad standing on one side and the Canadian PM standing on the other, an image that draws flak on social media. Hence, Angela Merkel slips in the W20 Summit invitation to the First Daughter during her (Merkel's) Washington visit, something that draws a lot of flak for herself (Merkel). Merkel sees the power map – Ivanka may not just be daddy's girl at daddy's office, but is the First Daughter with full security clearance and with an office next to that of the POTUS. Merkel is perhaps nurturing a relatively saner conduit to the Oval Office.

Perhaps we can get a free lesson here to see who the Ivanka of Mamata Banerjee is who can talk some sense into her. It sure is not Narindra Modi or Pranab Mukherjee – they don't have the ball bearings. Here's a hint – it is NOT a person, and in fact, literally has ball bearings associated with it. Think, it's not rocket science...

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 Mahbub Show* and ABC Radio's *Good Morning Bangladesh*, the founder of *Naveed's Comedy Club*. E-mail: naveed@naveedmahbub.com

NATIONAL LEGAL AID DAY

Legal empowerment as a way out of poverty?



SAJEDA FARISA KABIR

IT'S a story that we have all heard before. A poor girl from the village gets married in her early teens. Her education is stopped because her parents cannot manage to have so many mouths at home to feed. She is mistreated at her in-laws and beaten for dowry. Within a couple of years of marriage, she becomes a mother. Finally, when she has had enough or is forced to leave her husband's home, she returns to her parent's house and the vicious cycle of poverty continues. Such stories have almost become a cliché. To a certain extent, we have become desensitised to this and have convinced ourselves that this is the way it is always been and there is nothing we can do about it. Such is the fate of young girls of rural Bangladesh.

In our country, child marriage is a reality. Financial vulnerability of parents and social pressure plays a big part in ensuring that young girls are not able to stay in school and are married off before they are physically and mentally mature enough to understand the nature of marriage and the responsibility that comes with it. They get married with little or no education and after divorce, they are even more vulnerable than before, having no skill or training or knowledge to earn a living.

BRAC's network of legal aid clinics in Bangladesh have served many such girls, who have come for help when their marriage has broken down. Through mediation services, the Human Rights and Legal Aid Services (HRLS) programme, has successfully recovered a large sum of money on behalf of its young clients. In 2016 alone, approximately 15,000 mediations were conducted through BRAC and around BDT 31 crore was recovered.

Ninety seven percent of HRLS' clients are women. The average amount of dower in rural Bangladesh is Tk. 50,000 with the exception of Chittagong and Sylhet where the amount can be Tk. 100,000 and above. Legal aid programmes in Bangladesh has been effective in providing access to justice to many poor and disadvantaged people, especially women across the country; without such programmes, the underprivileged would face many challenges in claiming their rights (if at all), and find it difficult if not impossible in accessing the courts and fight a long, arduous legal battle.

It is, however, rare that this amount when received by the client along with maintenance for her and her child is used wisely. The money is spent quickly, or given to male members of the household (father or brother) to decide on how to use it. The money is seldom spent, keeping in mind long term returns and investments. This is where the problem lies. Even though these young women have taken a big step in coming forward to seek legal redress for their problems, this remedy alone (of seeking and receiving dower and maintenance) is not sufficient to make any significant changes to their lives. Unless the money they receive is used wisely, they are back where they started, but worse off by many folds. Divorced, broke, a single parent.

So the question arises, can we break this vicious cycle? Can young women come out of poverty? What can a girl do if she has access to a small pot of cash? Can she start a business? Can she get training? Can she equip



herself with a basic skill which qualifies her for employment in a factory? I don't see why not. But, she cannot do it alone. This is where the government and NGOs can play a part.

Legal aid programmes may start by giving support to their clients beyond a successful mediation and recovering of dower and maintenance money. Legal aid providers may view themselves as advisors and a medium through which the young clients can get access to reliable advice, training information and scope for schooling for their little ones. It is not necessary that the legal aid providers should have the internal capacity to provide such services themselves. It is helpful to assist in creating linkages with other organisations who may provide trainings to vulnerable women, thereby increasing their capacity and equipping them with skills, for instance, to work in a factory. Over the course of the next few years, HRLS intends to do just that. Create linkages with other BRAC programmes and other similar minded organisations so that the young clients of HRLS can have access to employment or financial assistance or skills training. BRAC as an organisation has the internal capacity to provide these facilities to its beneficiaries, either through its microfinance program, the skills development program or the migration program to name a few. What is necessary is the establishment of a formal referral system between programmes and when required external organisations so that clients are given advice and guidance as to what they can do next.

Some may argue that legal aid providers have done their jobs if they have successfully mediated a case which has helped their clients assert and claim their legal rights; their job ends there. I would have to

disagree to that to a certain extent. While this statement may hold true for a lot of people, it is certainly not the case for the vulnerable young clients who come to the legal aid clinics. These clients do not have financial literacy and lack awareness about their options in order to be economically independent. They are especially fragile, defenseless and prone to exploitation time and time again if not advised or guided properly.

Legal aid should be viewed as a tool in the fight against poverty. These programmes are the first port of call for some of the most vulnerable women in society. Through legal aid programs, these women can be identified and brought into mainstream programs which seek to alleviate poverty. Legal aid programmes have the potential to do much more and provide a holistic support to its clients beyond mediation and court case support.

This is particularly true when we talk about the "youth" of our country. In a conversation about youth, the young divorced parent is often not factored into the equation. With child marriage being as prevalent as it is in this country, there will always be a section of girls, who require inclusion into programmes which offer skills training and financial advice so that they may start rebuilding their life after a volatile marriage followed by a bitter divorce.

We want to see these clients, especially young girls go further in life, make something of themselves so that they have choices. A choice for a better life, a better future for their children.

The writer is Programme Head, Human Rights and Legal Aid Services Programme, BRAC, and advocate at Supreme Court.

A WORD A DAY



EVITERNITY

Noun literary

Eternal existence; everlasting duration

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| ACROSS | 34 Patchworks | 17 Mix up |
| | 40 Staff member | 19 Hazard |
| 1 Circus workers | 41 Disclose | 20 Kirk's science officer |
| 7 Not at home | 42 Animated character | 21 Uno doubled |
| 11 Cochine, for one | 43 Bureau | 22 That women |
| 12 Track event | | 23 Behold |
| 13 Popular card game | DOWN | 25 Hardly macho |
| 15 Vacant | 1 Middle X? | 28 2013 Disney hit |
| 16 Arrived | 2 Spring mo. | 29 Local resident |
| 18 Swiss peaks | 3 Calf's cry | 31 Twisted tightly |
| 21 Arp's art | 4 Skin problem | 33 Pool color |
| 22 Sacks out | 5 Limerick part | 34 Purr producer |
| 24 Peculiar | 6 Ooze | 35 Carnival setting |
| 25 "How come?" | 7 Sock pattern | 36 Commotion |
| 26 Fish eggs | 8 "Do -- Diddy Diddy" | 37 Commotion |
| 27 Phone photo | 9 Play division | 37 Writer Deighton |
| 29 Pleasant | 10 "Sure thing!" | 38 Nervous habit |
| 30 Time in office | 14 Tuscany setting | 39 Shrewed |
| 31 Base on balls | 16 West Point student | |
| 32 Swirly posters | | |

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

Z	O	R	B	A	P	A	S	T	A
A	R	O	O	M	A	L	T	A	R
G	R	O	W	N	P	E	A	C	E
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P	A	S	S	O	V	E	R		
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U	N	C	L	E	T	E	N	O	R
A	S	K	E	D	O	R	D	E	R

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker



BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott

