

A godsend for the Tigers

PLEASURE IS ALL MINE



SHAH HUSAIN IMAM

If Australia wins, the calculation of run rates may come into play. Incidentally, Bangladesh has till now better run rates than New Zealand. At any rate, if she cannot win against the Black Caps she is out of the race.

BY a huge stroke of luck, or you may call it divine intervention or compassionate justice, the rain-affected Australia versus Bangladesh match had been

declared a draw. One point each to both teams has been awarded. This has unlocked the way for Bangladesh to move to the semi-finals.

Meanwhile, England has defeated New Zealand securing its place in the semi-final. Bangladesh takes on New Zealand today. It is a must-win game for her if she is to be in the reckoning for the semis. Then England meets Australia on Saturday for a vital decider for the second team to move to the semis.

If, however, Australia wins, the calculation of run rates may come into play. Incidentally, Bangladesh has till now better run rates than New Zealand. At any rate, if she cannot win against the Black Caps she is out of the race.

A little flashback: When the Tri-Nation Series championship was lifted by New Zealand we lamented it could have gone our way! We lost what appeared to be a winnable match in our first encounter with the Black Caps. But against daunting odds we chased down 271 to beat New Zealand in the final game. By then, however, our chances of clinching the Tri-Nation Series trophy had slipped away as New Zealand, on the points table, had emerged as the winner.

Then the going for Bangladesh turned rough and gloomy much like the hovering inclement weather. It suffered a humiliating defeat against India with a score of 82 to 324 in its final preparatory match before the Champions Trophy. Commentators got a handle to make some swaggering remarks: "Bangladesh batsmen are harried by Indian bowlers" and "lack of touch between the bat and the ball has been a consistent feature of the Bangladesh innings." Of course, they were venting out their reactions to what they were observing but coming from sub-continental commentators those

made a grating sound. Not all Western commentators, however, are immune to erring on the side of nationalistic exultation. There is nothing wrong with such exuberance. But to hammer on Bangladesh's lack of adaptability to all conditions when they are clearly bridging the gaps there and indulge in self-delusion that after the fifth wicket "Bangladesh did not have any recognised batsmen" were far from encouraging.

I am referring to the abrasive comments with the hope that our cricketers would instill a new sense of determination so as not to court them by performances below par.

Lest we forget, our match with England following a hugely embarrassing defeat to India, even though in a preparatory face-off, delivered a positive message to our team management. Tamim scored a century plus 28 runs and composed a record partnership of 165 with

Mushfiquir Rahim. On the back of Tamim's dismissal, Mushfiquir fell. We ended up scoring 314 runs whereas when the two were on the crease, a total of 350 looked like a distinct possibility. This was not the first time that we failed to build on an advantage to take it to the finishing line. In fact this has been our weak point.

The logic of fielding eight batsmen to only three core bowlers proved fallacious. I remember Indian commentator Ravi Shastri observing that Taskin would be key to deterring the English chase of 300 plus runs that Bangladesh had put on the board. Surprisingly, he did not know that Taskin was not even included in the team!

Our 182 total against Australia is a shame when you think of Tamim scoring 95 runs in stark contrast to only 78 tallied by all other batsmen put together.

A theory has been floated to underline a "physical shortcoming" of

batsmen of limited height facing tall bowlers. When, over 6.5-foot tall pacers with an added advantage of a long-hand rush in to bowl from that height the ball hits the ground either bouncing away or skidding to make it "difficult" for a batter to play. This is gibberish when you consider the icons like Don Bradman or Sachin Tendulkar, let alone scores of others who were short- or medium-height batsmen.

The following will do our cricket team a world of good in boosting its confidence before the big event today: Let's draw on some inspirational comments cricketing legends Sachin Tendulkar and Kumar Sangakkara have made on the present and future of Bangladesh cricket.

According to Sachin, "If you look at the strengths of different teams, you will see some are strong in batting and others in the bowling department. Bangladesh is different from that standpoint; they are equally strong in batting, bowling and

fielding. Such a balanced team has to be a favourite. I do think Bangladesh can give a fight in the Champions Trophy. When it was not a mature team it had defeated India but now it is one of the world's best sides."

The great Sri Lankan cricketer Kumar Sangakkara who is the International Cricket Council's goodwill ambassador for the Champions Trophy wrote in the ICC website: "Bangladesh is the real dark horse of the Champions Trophy. They have come with great hopes and promise to the tournament. During the last two years under the leadership of Chandika Hathurusingha, they have improved amazingly. He is fortunate to have such an array of talented cricketers hungry for success."

Such laurels should only oblige us to push frontiers.

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Mushfiquir Rahim plays a shot during the ICC Champions Trophy match between Australia and Bangladesh at The Oval in London, June 5, 2017.

PHOTO: AFP

The curse of the Bonsai

HUMOROUSLY YOURS



NAVEED MAHBUB

THE horizontal axis of the graph surely extends from the right to the left, Middle Eastern style. That is the only explanation for denoting 4,500 crore (45 billion) to be

Wonder if Trump's recent visit to Saudi Arabia had anything to do with it. After all, palace intrigue is contagious, something that is now rife at the White House. And so the story goes that Trump did go around the Middle East asking for a pay up of a trillion dollars for US' G4S duties in the region. Even Uncle Sam's coffers are drying up. Oh, and POTUS is not happy with NATO not paying up, as evident in his shoving

aside the President of Montenegro. And no, the name of the country has nothing to do with Trump's racism...

I am sure the average American taxpayers don't give a rat's posterior about geopolitics but surely does when it comes to their tax paying dollars. They would rather see health care than the expensive upkeep of F-16s.

Scaled down, the scenario is not too different here in Bangladesh either as

the nation's coffers need revenue to pay its bills. Somebody has to pay for the bonsai trees near the airport. I have to say I thought a scary scene from the next Star Wars movie would be shot in Dhaka. After all, the bonsai do look like mutated trees from a Sci-Fi horror movie.

But there is a hefty price tag. Hence we go to China which exports its green dwarves though it itself builds vertical gardens to reduce CO2 emissions.

Since some of the botanical midgets are coming from Japan too, can we save some money by getting reconditioned ones? Maybe not a good idea - after reconditioning, the bonsai may turn into cilantro.

There is widespread ridicule. But I say the soil of Bangladesh needs the bonsai. We need the Zen. Ah, Zen - as long as the mind shuts out the fact that the human has stunted the natural growth of a living organism.

Look, the bonsai is the core essence of who we are. We stunt those who are due for a promotion, we wish to see the helping hand remain as the helping hand forever. Through our bonsai vision, we ridicule the culinary variety of noodles on cooking shows. Our sense of safety and sanity has been bonsai-fied as we approach the 1st anniversary of the Holey Artisan tragedy while the world sees yet another attack in London and the first of its kind in Tehran. Oh, and not to mention, now being that time of the year when the middle class of

Bangladesh is further bonsai-fied as its hard earned money stashed in banks is bonsai-fied.

Maybe to avoid the excise tax on the Tk. 100,000 in the bank, one can invest in half a bonsai. Can also score some green points: "Plant a tree, save the environment." Thus planting a bonsai falls under the SME category - the Small and the Midget for the Environment (says, Naveed, the SME - Small and Medium Entertainer).

Gotta pay the bills man! Gotta find new ways to tax. How about VAT on VAT, i.e., Value Added Taxes on Valueless Annoying Trolls on social media? How about death tax? At least a onetime payment is guaranteed (nine times for cats). What about VAT on birth? Curious how the 'at source' VAT works...

Ah bonsai! Reminds me of this lady who used to grow bonsai trees. Her daughter never went beyond 4 feet. Talk about the curse of the bonsai! As our honesty is bonsai-fied through ever increasing taxes at home and our safety is bonsai-fied with the ever increasing occurrences of terrorism around the globe, let us not forget the collective curse of the 8 billion honest, peaceful and hardworking bonsai...

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

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SOURCE: BOHEMIANSPACE

QUOTABLE Quote

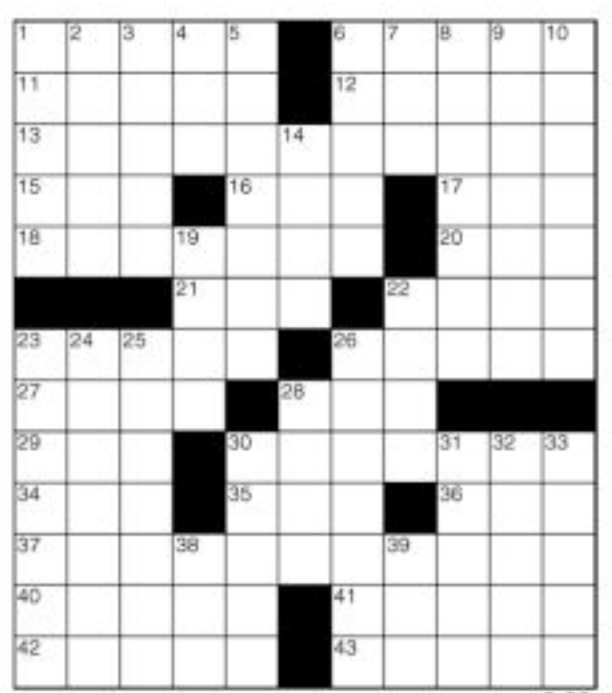


SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR

Self-knowledge is no guarantee of happiness, but it is on the side of happiness and can supply the courage to fight for it.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS									
1	Infants	34	Grassopper's pal	7	Soup buy	19	Gorillas and gibbons	32	Social group
6	Frighten	35	Furthermore	8	Pilot	33	Made a choice	38	Dedicated verse
11	Let up	36	Napkin spot	9	Put in other words	31	Chosen few	39	Snooze
12	Safe refuge	37	Downhill racer	10	Went in				
13	Pipe seller	40	Wear away	14	Euro division				
15	Memorable time	41	Barista's creation	19	Gorillas and gibbons				
16	Golf need	42	Sides in an ongoing battle	22	Metal boxes				
17	Had dinner	43	Velocity	23	Feels empathy				
18	Tries hard			24	Magnetite, for one				
20	Paver's goo			25	Part of some addresses				
21	Poker prize			26	Beach footwear				
22	Carry			28	Viper feature				
23	Turn red, maybe			30	Canary homes				
26	Fathered			31	Chosen few				
27	Winged archer			32	Social group				
28	Team backer								
29	-- Alamos								
30	Baseball's Jose								
DOWN									
1	Infamous motel name	2	Scrub, as a mission	3	Scrub, as a mission	4	H lookalike	5	Piece
6	Closet pairs								



YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

LOSES	TOSS
OPART	RISES
GENRE	ALERT
IRE	POMEPA
CARBON	PAPER
RUE	KENT
SCOOT	PINTS
OHNO	PUT
LITMUS	PAPER
INA	TIPRAE
DURIST	ELITE
SPITE	TAMED
SOUR	SPANS

BEETLE BAILEY

by Mort Walker



BABY BLUES

by Kirkman & Scott

