

The Rat of Brooklyn



HUMOROUSLY YOURS
Naveed Mahbub



Airport—an irritated, middle aged lady barking orders for people to line up as per their visa/immigration/nationality status. A couple gets yelled at, "You're too slow with your passport!" Gosh, I didn't know we were up for a High Noon draw to determine the fastest passport in the West!

She gives me an electrifying look. I get a jolt and nineteen hours of jetlag is evaporated in an instant as I await her next order: "20 push-ups! Right now!!"

Fortunately, I'm quick with my passport and my weekly practice of English on *Humorously Yours* convinces her that I am following the signs clearly as I queue up in the right line.

Welcome to New York. I have been missing this for a long time thanks to all the political correctness with the TSA and US immigration trying to put up a face of good customer service. It's just that the port of entry at an airport is really a fort of entry and with immigration

officials specially chosen to somehow be of Vulcan origins and being devoid of facial muscles responsible for a smile.

But to be fair, this lady is no pure bred. Her thick accent tells she herself is an immigrant in the land of

immigrants and totally ticked off that more immigrants are coming into HER land where SHE came first with the right to turn around, raise her hand, and yell: "Stop! I'm the last person to be naturalised in America. Now you turn around and

go back to where you came from, understand? Oh, and I voted for the first-time loser—I won't say who, but HE is my hero."

"Immigration is a breeze. I love it when the stoic face of the officer breaks into a beam when I say I'm a comedian. And then the welcoming sound of the metal stamp of entry on my passport.

But the biggest test is to see if my Bangladeshi credit card works here or not. Because, the richest country in the world is still cheap enough to charge USD 6 to get a trolley for the suitcases, something that is free in just about every airport around the world.

It works. Yeah! And the euphoria continues as my bags are already making their rounds on the baggage treads, and of course, also adding Dhaka Airport counterpart.

I'm out through the green channel in a jiffy. But something is amiss. I still have the blue customs slip stating that I have not been in a farm, nor am I carrying any disease agents. Usually airports like JFK and LAX are abuzz with pickle experts among the customs agents. But none are here. Not only that, once I'm out through the greening area threshold, the crowd is unusually thin.

It's clear to me right away as a scene from Miami Beach, Cox's Bazaar plays out in my mind. As I walk, the sea of orange disappears. They are the thousands of orange coloured crabs that last year into their holes as I,

the lone brown, approach the beach. Here at JFK, the colours swap places as the lone (metaphorical) orange (Trump) approaches, the thousands of browns (immigrants) cover into their holes at Jackson Heights, Jamaica, Bronx and Brooklyn.

But one such brown covers OUT from Brooklyn. He blows smoke out of his belly and thus hovers his cover from being an aspirant of the American Dream to a being mutant of the ISIS Nightmare. In the process, he blows the chances of many a legitimate would be immigrant while landing a blow to the pride of his nation of origin which celebrates its victory every Day less than a week from his heinous act. At one blow, he elevates the word Bangladesh to the 4th ranking on Twitter's hashtag trends, and of course, also adding "Ullah" to an everious number seven as Trump strikes another blow to the leniency of American immigration.

Trump's rhetoric is no longer an act of blowing smoke nor has been blowing hot and cold on this matter, as he blows away his opponents on immigration with yet another example to cite. This is an incident that for Bangladeshis, especially those in the US, will not blow over that quickly. It blows my mind to think what logic drives a man to leave his wife and three-month-old kid to bite the hand that feeds him. Sure, Jerusalem being the capital of Israel blows the stack of many, but this outcome?

He is in for a long haul in the can. But perhaps an alternative, cost effective punishment would be to just let him loose in Brooklyn where the large immigrant community of Bangladeshi origin would surely "take care of him" for messing it all up on all the hardworking Bangladeshis not only in New York, but also all over the US and visa aspirants at Madani Avenue.

Oh, and matchmakers, you may want to drop the "pick up" line "Here's a suitable groom—lives in America and has a Green Card." This "pick up" line is taken, as the FBI will now surely "pick up" a lot of other people...

1971, after Madison Square Garden, everyone chanted "Stop genocide in Bangladesh" which fell on deaf ears at the White House. And yet, Bangladesh proudly attains its victory on November 16 of that same year. Now, after the bomb attack in the Port Authority Bus Terminal, not too far from that very Madison Square Garden, many in America are chanting, "Add Bangladesh to the travel ban." The only difference, this time around, someone in the White House is VERY eager to follow through...

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The journey to Oslo

In pursuit of abolishing nuclear weapons



CHRISTIAN CLOBURN

On December 10 in Oslo, International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. ICAN started as a grassroots campaign in 2007. Its aim was to shift the paradigm of

discussion about nuclear weapons from security and deterrence to the environmental and humanitarian effects of nuclear explosions. As the prize demonstrates, ICAN has succeeded brilliantly. But, as ICAN

acknowledges, this is still only the beginning of the end of nuclear weapons. A key development was the holding of three governmental conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons in Norway, Mexico, and Austria. At every turn, the nuclear weapon states and their allies would claim the humanitarian narrative was reckless and dangerous. ICAN remained unwavering in its message: Nuclear weapons must be banned.

By the conference in Mexico, held in early 2014, ICAN was calling for the commencement of negotiations on establishing an international legally binding instrument to ban nuclear weapons. After all, land mines, chemicals and biological weapons were banned through their respective instruments, and then global norms were established against their use.

The negotiations for the ban treaty concluded in July 2017. One hundred and twenty-two states voted to adopt the treaty. It opened for signature on September 20 and more than 50 states have signed it. It will enter into force when ratified by 50 states, preferably in the next one to three years.

At the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony in Oslo, the Nobel Committee Chair Berit Reiss-Andersen praised ICAN and condemned the use and threat of nuclear weapons on humanitarian, moral and legal grounds.

Speaking at the ceremony, ICAN Executive Director Beatrice Fihn stated that it is insanity to allow countries to be ruled by these weapons. Many critics of this movement suggest that we are the irrational

ones, the idealists with no grounding in reality. That the nuclear-armed states will never give up their weapons. But we represent the only rational choice. We represent those who refuse to accept nuclear weapons as a fixture in our world, those who refuse to have their fates bound up in a few lines of launch code.

She further asserted "It's an affront to democracy to be ruled by these weapons. But they are just weapons. They are just tools. And just as they were created by geopolitical context, they can just as easily be destroyed by placing them in a humanitarian context."

Fihn further addressed the nuclear umbrella states, including Norway, in her closing remarks. She stated, "To the nations who believe they are sheltered under the umbrella of nuclear weapons, you will be complicit in your own destruction and the destruction of others in your name!"

"To all nations, choose the end of nuclear weapons over the end of us!"

"This is the choice that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons represents. Join this Treaty."

Following Fihn's speech, Setsuko Thurlow, a survivor of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, recounted her harrowing survival of the atomic blast that annihilated her school. She heard a voice in the distance, which told her to keep pushing towards the light.

She explained that "Our light now is the ban treaty. To all in this hall and all listening around the world, I repeat those words that I heard called to me in the ruins of Hiroshima: 'Don't give up! Keep pushing! See the light! Crawl towards it!'"

Indeed, the new light and hope is the ban treaty. This treaty must enter into force and it is time for all nations to sign it. All responsible leaders will sign this treaty and history will judge harshly those who reject it as highly idealist.

Since humanity now has the choice to

either accept nuclear annihilation or ban nuclear weapons, it is vital for all states to sign and ratify the treaty. For the time being, it seems unlikely that nuclear-armed states will join the treaty. As to nuclear umbrella states, the situation is fluid. Such states, including Norway, boycotted the negotiations, with the exception of the Netherlands. In fact, in late March, the Secretary of State of Norway, Marit Berger Rosland, mentioned that "Norway and our allies have an aim for a world without nuclear weapons, but as long as others have nuclear weapons, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance."

However, the Norwegian parliament is set to take a vote on convening an inquiry in which parliamentarians, with the engagement of civil society, will examine the consequences of signing and not signing the ban treaty. Furthermore, both the Prime Minister, President, and Chair of the Committee on Defence and Security met

with representatives of the ICAN in Parliament. At the press event with the President of Norway, Greth Østern, Head of the Norwegian People's Aid's Nuclear Disarmament Project, said that it is absolutely vital for the Norwegian parliament to engage in discussions about the utility and the risks related to nuclear deterrence.

Building upon Østern's statement, Susi Snyder of ICAN and Pax Sweden, that parliaments in Switzerland, Spain, and Italy have passed resolutions in which they have instructed their respective governments to explore the ratification of the ban treaty. Snyder concluded her remarks by stating that the parliamentarians will have to think about the consequences of not joining the treaty. They must think about the following question: Are you willing to then be complicit in using nuclear weapons?

We now have the choice to live in a world free of nuclear weapons. It is time for people everywhere to discuss this momentous choice.

Thank you ICAN, for changing the status quo in the nuclear disarmament field.

Christian Cloburn is the senior associate, Global Security Institute.
Courtesy: Inter Press Service



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QUOTABLE Quote

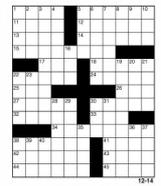


BANGABANDHU SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN
FOUNDING FATHER AND FIRST PRESIDENT OF BANGLADESH

Independence is not achieved with the hoisting of the flag only. Ensuring the security of people's lives and property is also an inseparable part of independence.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

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| ACROSS | 34 Entirely conjunctural | 16 Jotting need |
| 5 Gung-ho | 38 Like some clocks | 19 Maze runners |
| 11 Canyon sound | 41 Bike part | 20 Grab |
| 12 Ssaur | 42 Prepare lefovers | 21 Addition of a bear |
| 13 McCormack of "Will & Grace" | 43 Clickable picture | 22 One of a certain trio |
| 14 Media's Caitlyn | 44 Grassy hills | 23 General Bradley |
| 15 Isolate | 45 Circus structure | 28 Tooth layer |
| 17 Greek vowel | DOWN | 29 One kind of equality |
| 18 Handled | 1 Honey bunch | 30 Michael Jackson |
| 22 Studied (over) | 2 Land unt | hit |
| 24 Patriot Allen | 3 Chinese restaurant choice | 31 Response to a joke |
| 25 French friend | 4 Find | 35 Play makeup |
| 26 Mammie's man | 5 Prince of India | 36 Steel ingredient |
| 27 Track horse | 6 Disinclined | 37 Mint product |
| 30 Quick snacks | 7 Suggest | 38 Blible boat |
| 32 Concert site | 8 Operated | 39 Sawbuck |
| 33 Epoch | 9 Finished off | 40 Cry of discovery |
| | 10 Yonder ship | |



YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

MESS SQUARE AXLE PULSAR SPOT OINKER TRO COLA AVOLO SORHMO CAWS LLOAN MINKS TAWNY JENS CROWD EUNS CHAP OFA JUNE CHIEZ ONTIME GSNAT BOMBED OLSO

BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER



BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

