

Mayday May Day

HUMOROUSLY YOURS



NAVEED MAHBUB

THE captain boasts of taking advantage of the tail wind, the earth's rotation and the earth's curvature, but the fact remains that Los Angeles (LAX) to the airline's hub city

takes no less than 16 hours. The departure is late. Add 16 hours of agony in anticipation of missing my connecting flight to Dhaka. After 16 agonising, body-contorting, sleep-depriving and feet-bloating hours, the plane lands and then taxis endlessly towards the boarding ramp at the farthest end of the airport. What ramps up though is Murphy's Law: "Ladies and gentleman, due to our late arrival, we have to wait 10 minutes for the boarding gate to free up." Bring it on. If I can't stop the barrage of bad news, I might as well enjoy it... After a mini marathon with a loaded backpack, with hurdles in between of stripping at another security checkpoint (don't you trust LAX's TSA guys, or did we acquire something nefarious from thin air, literally, at 40,000 feet?) and frustrated "excuse

me!"'s to standing passengers blocking the travellers), I reach my gate number zillion, which, luck has it, is on the other side of the airport. Considering that we queue up to board before the pilots leave their homes/hotels, the sight here of most of the Dhaka bound passengers sleeping tells me that not only have I made it to my connecting flight, but we surely (thankfully) have been delayed. I catch my breath. Finally, the pre-boarding announcement: "Business class passengers, passengers with children, passengers needing extra time, gold members, silver members, platinum members, bronze members, rust members, Chapai-Nawabganj-Debidwar Friendship Society members...will pre-board. Others, please remain seated." Needless to say, everyone lines up in panic lest the plane leaves. We board a bus. I forget, this is a Dhaka bound flight. So, all gold, silver, platinum...Chapai-Debidwar are all in three buses. The journey by bus is as long as my very recent journey by plane, to the point where I almost expected to be dropped off at Gulistan. We finally stop at another far end of the airport. All business, gold, silver,...,Chapai-Debidwar fist fight our way out



PHOTO: STAR

only to queue up again on the tarmac. And then, *deja vu!* My eyes rest on the christened name of an aircraft nearby that is lucky to be attached to a boarding gate. It is the one that brought me from LAX. So, I wait, run, strip, get frisked, clothe, run again, shout, huff, puff, pant, queue up, bus and queue up again, only to end up where I had started! I board, take my seat, plane takes off, I fall asleep only to be woken up for the customs forms being

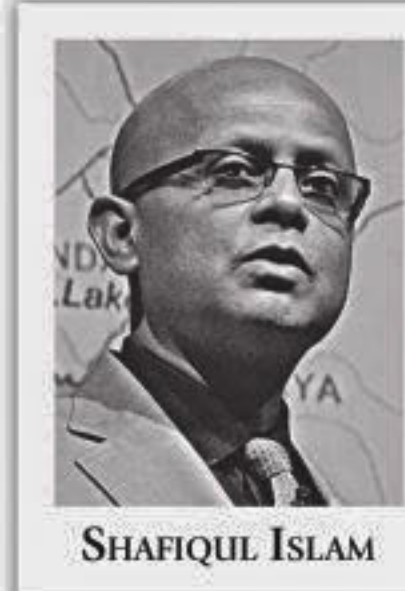
distributed. I get my paper work done and prepare to fall asleep, only to be asked by the homebound remittance earner sitting next to me to fill out his form. Though dying to sleep, I have no heart to say no. I had better answer the questions on the form correctly, which in turn means asking the gentleman a ton of questions and explaining things clearly, otherwise he will be in a soup on top of being in a soup under suspicious eyes upon coming home after three years.

Finally, I am done. I look up not only to a pair of grateful eyes, but to a whole army of others on my left, right, front, back and yes, on top looking down. News travels fast. Half the plane's passengers pay pilgrimage to my seat. I almost expect the captain to come and have me endorse his flight plan. My "toil" of the last 20 hours pales into insignificance as I fill out each customs form which speak of unique stories of toil and tears so as to foil the toil and tears of the loved ones they are going back to after so many years. The least I can do is sleep a little less to fill out a few pieces of paper for those without whom, I dare not imagine, how we would boast a tiger economy. Upon arrival, they will not be greeted with garlands, or smiles, but will be eyed as spawning hilsas. Here are a few of the very millions for whom we have "allocated" one particular day—May Day. Considering their very dire straits that we ignore during the remaining 364, may just require an aviator's dreaded distress call, "Mayday, Mayday!"

Naveed Mahbub is a former engineer at Ford & Qualcomm USA, the former CEO of IBM & Nokia Networks Bangladesh turned comedian (by choice), the host of ATN Bangla's *The Naveed Mahbub Show* and the founder of *Naveed's Comedy Club*. E-mail: Naveed@NaveedMahbub.com

Neither necessary nor sufficient

Three enabling conditions for effective transboundary water management



SHAFIQUUL ISLAM

DOES life cause death? Does oxygen cause fire? Does rain cause flood? On the surface—from the philosophical (life and death) to physical (rainfall and

whereas with enablement effects are not necessary but possible. Many effects are possible that may or may not happen because of contextual interactions (presence of oxygen is necessary but will not lead to fire unless there is a trigger). And such interactions for complex TWM cannot be prescribed a-priori. The challenges and opportunities associated with transboundary water are many. There are multiple schools of

relationships; for example, chlorination reduces water-borne diseases). For complex problems (where cause-effects relationships are ambiguous and uncertain), the power and promise of the conventional approach to specify the causal conditions no longer holds. Not even a question like *what causes floods?* can provide generalisable and predictable answers. Bringing in human agency, with our value-based decisions around prioritisation of water for irrigation

and Pakistan during this period. Yet, it took several decades to sign the 1994 Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty. What are the similarities and differences for these two cases? What can we learn from the historical evolution of these two cases? Among the different modes of cooperation, mediated negotiations have shown some success in initiating, affecting and sustaining TWM among neighbouring countries. A key for such successful outcomes appears to be a set

Rules of Governance. Together they are a focal set of conditions to initiate, design and implement a resilient negotiated process to resolve water management issues. Over the last several decades, there is growing consensus that the complexity of issues as well as the competing and often conflicting values and priorities call for a reframing of the TWM problems. The politics of water demand answers: Who decides? Who benefits? Who bears the burden? At what scale? At what price? These difficulties are amplified by practical questions like, in the Nile, how can we reconcile building of the dam to support Ethiopia's economic development with the need for adequate water for a growing population in Egypt? Questions for the Ganges may include: How can future management meet the previous agreements on the Ganges that allocate water between India and Bangladesh? How does any water agreement among the Himalayan basin countries relate to larger regional concerns beyond water?

The solution space for these complex TWM problems can't be pre-stated. Consequently, the goal is not to search and satisfy the necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for securing reliable predictive outcomes. We must look for and identify situational conditions for effective intervention and desirable outcomes. Identifying and implementing these successfully is a craft, and this craft is dependent on engaging in continual adaptive learning. In March 2016, for example, after decades of hostility and stalemate, Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan signed a Declaration of Principles on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, signalling a concrete expression of the three parties desire to move beyond political posturing and rhetoric. Now, moving forward from satisfying this first enabling condition, there are now opportunities to seek lasting water security for the Nile. Similarly, as the time for the 1996 Ganges Treaty renewal nears, this is an opportune time to think about enabling and situational conditions for effective TWM of the Himalayan rivers.

Dr Shafiqul Islam is Director of Water Diplomacy, Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Professor of Water Diplomacy at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, USA. His Twitter handle is: @ShafiqulIslam



Water wars in a political and economic sense are already being waged between competing states in several regions, including by building dams on international rivers.


PHOTO: SAM PANTHAKY/AFP

scholarship; yet, there appears to be a void of actionable ideas on *what to do* and *how to accomplish desirable outcomes*. With the risk of being too simplistic, the general approach picks one or more items from this list: if we get the science (hydro-management) or market (hydro-market) or power and participation (hydro-politics), or the process (hydro-diplomacy) right, we can successfully manage our transboundary water resources. The logic and promise of conventional notion of causality has served us well to understand and manage simple problems (with clear cause-effect

vs urban populations and meeting ecosystem needs, into the mix of TWM, make the identification of necessary and sufficient conditions extremely contentious. Despite repeated calls and efforts to develop a comprehensive approach to resolve TWM problems, search for causal mechanisms has yet to yield any reliable theory. For example, in the 1950s USA sent two envoys to address two water conflicts: one to South Asia and the other to the Middle East. In 1960, the Indus Treaty was signed and it survived the last 60 years despite several wars between India

of enabling conditions; not any easily identifiable and replicable causal laws or mechanisms. In our recent book *Complexity of Transboundary Water Conflicts: Enabling Conditions for Negotiating Contingent Resolution*, my colleague Choudhury and I introduced three enabling conditions and examine seven cases—Indus, Jordan, Nile, Danube, Colorado, Brahmaputra, and Ganges—to illustrate the utility of these conditions for effective TWM. These three enabling conditions are: Active Recognition of Interdependence; Mutual Value Creation; and Adaptive Regime and

QUOTABLE Quote



MUHAMMAD ALI
AMERICAN PROFESSIONAL BOXER, ACTIVIST, AND PHILANTHROPIST

Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Marina sight

6 Computer shortcut

11 Old anesthetic

12 Earthy color

13 Intent look

14 Pentagon bigwigs

15 Face feature

17 Savvy about

18 Falls back

20 Protracted

22 Bar need

23 Summer

26 Got up

28 Chew the scenery

29 Bar orders

31 Phone bill addition

32 Bud's place

33 Storage spot

34 Goblet part

36 Spot

38 Comic strip unit

40 Ominous tarot card

43 Tickle

44 Goof

45 Alacrity

46 Hand costs

DOWN

1 "For sure!"

2 Lawyer: Abbr.

3 Case relocation

4 Long lunches

5 "—bien!"

6 Unruly group

7 NASA, for one

8 Attitude reversal

9 Take five

10 Approximating phrase

16 Peyton's brother

18 Tale teller

19 Farm unit

21 Some poetry

23 "Alice" diner

24 Suit to —

25 Oboe part

27 Cat variety

30 Guitarist Paul

33 Boat's back

34 Relaxing places

35 Pack down

37 Concept

39 Went ahead

41 Sock part

42 Day pts.

WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO dsopinion@gmail.com.

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

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

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker



BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott

