

The mirror speaketh the truth



and to hold on to a multiple *loppa* catches with both hands or to stop a boundary with your palm or your booted foot if you happen to speak in Bangla. That has been the explicit dark lesson from the T20 World Cup, except for the occasional sparkles flashing out of the galleries due to the glittery attires under the Middle-Eastern sun.

Cricket is a wonderful game. Here, the spirit of sports is supreme. Losing or winning doesn't matter; to the losing team, that is. See, I wrote "losing" ahead of "winning" because participation is so very important. That is why after losing five matches in a row, Bangladesh will play straight into the final round of the next T20 World Cup. We lost, but cricket is the winner. I cannot blame the optimists for saying that our team has indeed improved since the last assembly of world greats, for which we had to struggle through the precarious qualifiers.

But the notorious cynic has delivered a deadly googly—that during the current T20 World Cup, stronger performing teams had a meeting atop Burj Khalifa, a venue chosen to surreptitiously avoid the media. There, it was reportedly decided that they

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gentleman's game, where the outcome of a contest is like grades in Play Group. Our motto is: Don't worry, just play.

As for the injustice, I am referring to our natural inability. We hit, they catch. They hit, we can't always catch. The sun, remember! But in some cases, it is because they are simply taller than most of us. International matches should be held height- or weight-wise. Let us learn something from wrestling and boxing. Now, the smart alec among you will mention Sachin and Miandad. I knew it! But we are here focusing only on normal human beings. Concentrate!

To calm the waters after the Gulf storm, the government should henceforth ban pre-match expert opinion on television. They should be okay at home, because the wife and the husband never listen when the other is talking. Experts also must voluntarily avoid offering any preview on cricket performance, because their predictions make them look amateurish after every match. They could talk about venues and records, evaluate matches already played, but they should never delve into the future. That's dangerous! That acumen requires study and research, and an analytical mind. Intelligence helps.

The incomprehensible disorientation of our cricketers at this world tournament reminded me of events unfolding at a studio while taking a passport photo. The very cautious cameraman asks you to lift your chin a wee bit, move your face a little to the right, not so much, up your shoulders, then bring your eyes down *samanno*, smile, not so much, perrrrfect... and click goes his DSLR camera. And you have an unrecognisable portrait. Our cricketers seem to be abiding by the advice of every coach, on and off the field, resulting in distorted batting posture, grotesque bowling action and hilarious catching. Physios should recommend cotton in the earhole—both of them.

Passport pictures do not always tell the truth. However, a recent press

conference testified that mirrors speaketh the truth. Mushfiquir Rahim, not going exactly through the best of patches, was livid after the match against Sri Lanka on October 24, perhaps because he had just knocked 57 off 37 balls after quite some time.

Criticised for unexpected and repeated disappointing performances, Mushfiquir advised the critics (read avid fans) of his Bangladesh team to look at their faces in the mirror. His next statement was pathetic from a cricketer, who has been showered with much love, genuine admiration and handsome honorarium by these same followers: "They do not play for Bangladesh; we do." Actually, it would perhaps not make much of a difference if we played. There is no score lower than zero, or a punishment higher than six.

Having been advised by a celebrity with such a massive contribution to our cricket, we all have had a good look into the mirror. Besides our old moles befriending new dark spots, mistaken dimples in the vicinity of fresh wrinkles, this was a great opportunity to see who we are: flawed but not arrogant, imperfect but not ungrateful, sinful but seeking forgiveness. We have faced the truth, Mr Mushfiquir Rahim. Will you too face your demons? In the mirror, that is.

We need not argue any further. I have found a solution to our problem of losing five times. The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) should bid for the next World Cup. It's a lot of hard work, planning and PR, marketing and manoeuvring. But most importantly, we should prepare the slowest of dead pitches, select 10 spinners with left-right mix in the starting XI, and a bowler-wicket-keeper without pads. Till then, please leave the Tigers in the jungle alone. They cannot speak for themselves.

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Bangladesh national cricket team after their match against Australia during the ICC T20 World Cup at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium in the UAE on November 4, 2021. SOURCE: BCB

PROJECT SYNDICATE

The economy that planetary health requires



At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, analysts and pundits spun visions of how the crisis would reshape the global economy.

Many heralded the opportunity to transform our financial systems, supply chains, and ways of working. The overall message was that the post-pandemic future would be greener, healthier, and more just.

Now, almost two years after the pandemic started, excitement about creating an economic "new normal" has mostly dissipated. Apart from occasional lockdowns and mask-wearing, the world has largely returned to business as usual. The fight against the pandemic repeatedly has been described as a "war," but there have been no radical changes akin to a wartime mobilisation. On the contrary, the global pandemic response has operated under pre-pandemic economic norms. Despite urgent appeals for a "people's vaccine" and repeated calls for vaccine equity, the rules of the market dominated vaccine distribution, and the pharmaceutical industry has marched on, unreformed.

Likewise, policymakers continue to act as if—to paraphrase Greta Thunberg—the world is not on fire. UN Secretary-General António Guterres described the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as a "code red for humanity." Yet, the countries' current Nationally Determined Contributions

(NDCs) under the framework established by the 2015 Paris climate agreement are inadequate to achieve the Paris accord's goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, relative to preindustrial levels.

The ongoing United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland is the most immediate policy lever available. But the international climate regime needs to go beyond voluntary commitments to reduce emissions and make good on the rich countries' promise to provide financial assistance to the world's poorest and most vulnerable parts.

I am not an economist. I am a physician who specialises in the new field of "planetary health," which focuses on the links between human and planetary well-being. Its core premise is straightforward: protecting and improving our health requires tackling the underlying causes of human disease and ecosystem damage simultaneously.

The economy we have today is destroying our well-being. It unleashed human ingenuity, created financial wealth, and lifted billions of people from poverty. But it also damaged ecosystems and exacerbated social inequality. During the first year of the Covid-19 crisis, more than 114 million jobs were lost, while the world's wealthiest became USD 5 trillion richer than they had been before the pandemic began. And by accelerating climate change and biodiversity loss, our current economy imperils future generations' ability to survive and thrive. As a planetary health physician, I believe that the treatment for this disease is economic—not medical.

During this pandemic, we have witnessed a dramatic surge in the use of

personal protective equipment (PPE)—face masks and shields, gloves, and gowns that look like astronaut suits. But to truly recover, we also need a different kind of PPE—a people- and planet-centred economy. Because climate change and other forms of ecological damage increase the likelihood of future pandemics, this PPE would not just liberate us from the current crisis. The goal established by the World Health Organization's Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response—to make Covid-19 the last pandemic of its kind—depends on it.

A people- and planet-centred economy is one that advances the well-being of the entire Earth. It is an economy that has deep respect for the planet's boundaries, such as the temperature limit enshrined in the Paris Agreement. And it ensures that the basic daily needs of all people are met—for example, through universal healthcare systems and redistributive social policies. The metrics of success for this PPE are not gross domestic product or per capita income, but the ability of children to grow up to reach their full potential or the restoration of species threatened with extinction.

An example of this PPE has already been proposed by English economist Kate Raworth. Unlike the current economic model, with its limitless supply and demand curves, Raworth's "Doughnut Economy" visualises a narrow "safe and just space for humanity" that neither overshoots the planet's boundaries nor falls short in meeting society's basic needs.

Early in the pandemic, the city of Amsterdam committed to adopting the doughnut as its post-pandemic economic model. Since then, the city has implemented projects and



People, some wearing protective face masks, walk through Waterloo Station, amid the Covid-19 pandemic, in London, Britain, on July 4, 2021. FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

policies ranging from the circular use of materials in building construction to reforms in the local fashion industry. The next challenge is to apply this model in low- and middle-income countries to ensure that they fulfil their societies' needs without breaching planetary limits.

We have entered the "decisive decade." Only nine years remain before we reach the deadlines set by the Paris Agreement and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We must use this critical period to design

a true people- and planet-centred economy. The growing planetary health community has an important role to play in creating an alternative that will help us overcome the pandemic, and ultimately meet the goals we have set for ourselves as a civilisation.

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QUOTABLE
Quote

KAMAL HAASAN
Indian actor
(born November 7, 1954)

If it doesn't reach the last poor man, your constitution is wrong.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Spots for tots

6 Swift

11 One of the primates

12 Make amends

13 Chess game start

15 Stew sphere

16 Opponent

17 Vigor

18 Capitol worker

20 Mine yield

21 Wallet bill

22 Swear

23 Car part

26 Sacred song

27 Notorious czar

28 — Vegas

29 King, in Latin

30 Movie technique

34 Rainbow shape

35 Bond rating

36 "— So Fine"

37 Home-buying expense

40 Burdened down

41 Make blank

42 Fencing swords

43 Factions

DOWN

1 Pork servings

2 Indian coin

3 Clarifying words

4 Prohibit

5 Brandy glass

6 Wild party

7 Money machine

8 Become exhausted

9 Reciprocal

10 Most profound

14 Lunch time

19 Heaps

22 Expense

23 Wonderful event

24 Area of common interest

25 CPA's study

26 Oversees

28 Bank offering

30 Big pipes

31 In the lead

32 Gaggles group

33 Snaky shapes

38 Behold

39 Work wk's end

SUNDAY'S ANSWERS

S	C	R	A	M	S	W	A	B
A	R	U	B	A	C	A	N	A
L	I	N	E	N	A	D	D	L
E	M	U	T	E	N	R	A	N
S	E	P	A	R	A	T	I	O
M	A	N	E	S	H	A	D	E
O	V	E	N	F	A	Q		
R	E	P	A	R	A	T	I	O
A	R	T	E	T	C	L	A	W
S	E	N	O	R	E	L	V	I
D	E	M	O		T	I	E	R

BEEBLE BAILEY

by Mort Walker

BABY BLUES

by Kirkman & Scott