

Is our generation ready for future challenges?



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HISTORY is filled with the tales of struggles against oppressors, and to a neutral observer, Bangladesh's momentous victory against Pakistan in 1971 may be viewed with no particular proclivity. To the wartime veterans, however, the sentiments, the memories, and the embodiment of the spirit of the struggle in their own actions speak of a story that those who did not see the war would never comprehend. Having celebrated the 50th anniversary of our independence last year, we must also confront a sombre truth: the future of our country will soon experience a change of guards. As if in a relay race, the baton shall pass to a generation distanced by time and memory from the struggle of Bangladesh against the Pakistani usurpers. This is a generation which has only heard stories, read or seen disparate representations of the great war. Our generation, thus, must engage in soul-searching and ask: what does the spirit of Liberation War mean for us in performing our duties? And how can we nurture it within ourselves to help Bangladesh become the Sonar Bangla envisioned by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman—a dream which inspired hundreds of thousands to fight to their death for the country's freedom?

The question of the change of guards bears extra significance for Bangladesh, because its socioeconomic and political journey has been shaped by our leaders in the government and society at large, who were mostly witnesses of and/or active participants in our struggle for becoming the masters of our own fate. They have seen how our hopes have transformed, how we have strived to overcome the unforgiving inheritance of a devastated, war-torn country, and how we have reached where we are. This close "eye-witness" experience has seeped into their motivation for pushing towards welfare-based policymaking in a way that the current generation will find challenging to emulate. The emotional distance among the future politicians, policymakers and the countrymen is likely to increase. This might result in a certain dehumanisation of the welfare policies and reduce their fortune-changing effect on the poor and vulnerable people. The psychological drive of a leader of the country to improve the lives of the country's people is an important cog in the wheel of the development process. If the policymakers lose touch with the pulse of the people, policies will be misplaced and the results will be unexpected and dire.

The Americans have personified "The American Dream," which is a national ethos of the US—the set of ideals (democracy, rights, liberty, opportunity, and equality) in which freedom includes the opportunity for prosperity and success, as well as an upward social mobility, achieved through hard work in a society with few barriers. However, how do we define the "Spirit of the Liberation War"? Beyond the goals envisioned by Bangabandhu, the spirit of the Liberation War has no measurable definition of an ideal. This lack of clarity will be problematic for the future generations, who have known the history of war through scant exposure to stories, movies or books.

The historic speech of Bangabandhu on March 7, 1971 was a culmination of



ILLUSTRATION:
MANAN MORSHED

emotions and insights gained through the feeling of being at one with his own countrymen. Together, the leadership of Bangabandhu and the determination and sacrifice of ordinary folks who rose to his call ensured that we won an almost unwinnable war. This togetherness also contributed to Bangladesh's meteoric rise to becoming a socio-economically developing country, in many respects even surpassing India and Pakistan, who had achieved their liberation much earlier, in 1947. Bangladesh has fared better in improving life expectancy (72 years compared to 69 years in India and 67 years in Pakistan), and Gender Gap Index (ranked 65th whereas India ranked 140th and Pakistan ranked 153rd), to give a few examples. Recently, Bangladesh also surpassed India in terms of GDP per capita, as reported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These numbers speak volumes about the enormity of our achievements within a much shorter time span than our South Asian neighbours, having inherited a land ravaged by war and looted by the Pakistan Army.

Our generation, as well as our successors, have much to learn from the war veterans who have been at the helm of the country's socioeconomic progress. The spirit of the Liberation War must translate into tangible goals, rooted in empathy for the people and an unwavering reverence for our past.

I conclude with a sobering observation: the dark forces do not go away easily. They persist, and when one group of oppressors are vanquished, another is already lurking behind to fill the gap. Bangabandhu, the larger-than-life figure, the towering man who orchestrated the movement for our freedom, fell to the machinations of such dark forces. Thus, we, and the generations to come, have to be careful safeguards of our freedom. Thomas Jefferson once said, "Every generation needs a new revolution." Our elders had theirs. What is our revolution going to be? Can we carry on and carry the spirit within ourselves?

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Stop using megaphones and sound boxes!

Recently, I woke up one night to gunshot-like sounds and realised that it was due to festivities for the New Year, 2022, in Dhaka city. Fireworks and flying lanterns lit up the sky all throughout the night. I tried to get some sleep, given my poor health at the time, but failed.

At around 5am, when my flatmates were done celebrating, I began experiencing a whizzing sound in my left ear. Two days later, I left Dhaka and consulted a doctor in my hometown of Rangpur. The ENT specialist diagnosed my problem as tinnitus, a kind of middle ear infection caused by intolerable sound levels. He suggested I stay away from sounds of more than 50 decibels (dB). As this would be impossible to do in Dhaka, I decided to stay in my village for the next couple of months. Sadly, I have discovered that even this quaint area is not free from noise pollution.

Almost every night, teenagers rent high-volume sound boxes or megaphones, playing music at more than 120dB, and disregarding the elderly, sick, and those with other

health issues. But these devices are also used for political activities and during election campaigns. The loud and harsh slogans shake up the ground under our feet for hours, and put our health and the environment at risk.

According to the Department of Environment (DoE), the maximum level of sound tolerable to human beings is less than 50dB in residential areas during the day, and 45dB at night. Unfortunately, the average level of sound in almost every city in Bangladesh is much higher, especially in Dhaka city.

Banning the use of loudspeakers in political processions, election campaigns, and social events could tremendously help reduce noise pollution. Traffic police can play a vital role by punishing those who use hydraulic horns unnecessarily. At the same time, parents and teachers should discourage young people from using high-volume music players during recreational activities.

Rezaul Karim Reza, Rangpur

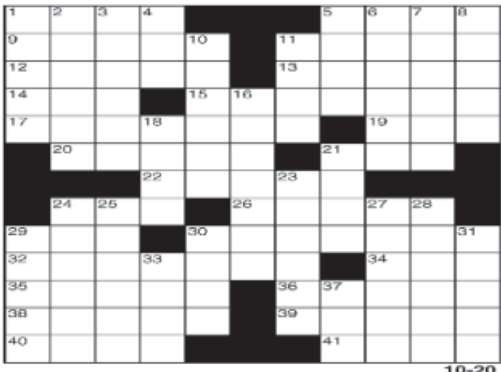
CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Deliberate
5 Frost, for one
9 Women's quarters
11 Do a Thanks-giving job
12 Furious
13 UFO pilot
14 Snapshot
15 Strands
17 Bars
19 Writer Harper
20 Lukewarm
21 Checkers side
22 Hackneyed
24 Neon, for one
26 Cost as much as
29 Swindle

30 Silk sources
32 Seaside pools
34 Got together
35 Vigilant
36 Bush's successor
38 Odometer units
39 Birth-related
40 Pod contents
41 Muscle quality

DOWN
1 Fleet makeup
2 Rodeo rope
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4 Soaked
5 _ Alto
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baseballer
7 Made level
8 Keyed up
10 Autobiography
11 Train units
16 Fireplace sight
18 Makes a choice
21 Nevada city
23 Arizona city
24 Player in a mask
25 Lansbury of Broadway
27 Soup choice
28 Kind of band or show
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30 Barracks beds
31 Past its best
33 Refinery rocks
37 Slugger's need



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



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Invitation for e-Tender

Memo No-44.01.0000.057.11.030.21/967/Betar

Date: 16-01-2022.

For the financial year 2021-2022. e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following items.

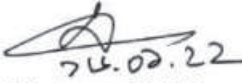
S L	Description	Tender ID	Procurement Method	Online Tender Publication Date & Time	Online Tender Closing Date & Time
1.	Design, Supply and Installation of 150-Foot 3-Legged Self-Supporting Tower with an Equipment Shelter Room and Dismantle of existing Tower (if any) Wind Speed130-220 Kmph.	648481	OSTETM	17 Jan 2022 14:30	28 Feb 2022 14:00

This is an online Tender, Where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/ hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Systems Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-tender documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (<http://www.helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd>).

The Procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all Tenders/Proposal/Pre-Qualification/E.OIs.



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