

Just cool it!

PLEASURE IS ALL MINE



SHAH HUSAIN IMAM

Street solution may leave a trail of martyrs we will have 'diboshes' on but it leads to a 'pedestrian' mechanism to deliver the result.



STAR ARCHIVE

A global social attitudes study has put a badge of dishonour, so to speak, on our lapel. It claims that most racially intolerant populations are in the developing world, with Bangladesh, Jordan and India in the top five.

Respondents from 80 countries were asked who they would refuse to live next to? Many chose the option 'people of a different race'. Hong Kong's score was highest at 71.8 percent, followed by Bangladesh on 71.7 percent, Jordan 51.4 percent and India 43.5 percent.

This is a Mail online story based on World Value Survey measuring the social attitudes of people as originally reported in The Washington Post.

Light or fair complexion is preferable to dark skin -- something we stumble on at the informal level so far as social attitude in Bangladesh goes. Parents with marriageable daughters should know it too well. There is a racist tinge to it but in the unlikely event of having to choose a new neighbour of a different race, the premise as well as the finding are hypothetical. We don't choose neighbours, they are just there as a geographical constant.

We are not merely among the world's 'most racist' countries or chauvinist, but we are also easily one of the world's most politically intolerant countries.

Political intolerance is seminally a product of leadership bankruptcy -- on both sides of the aisle. There are definite ramifications of it. Dynastic lineage, an expedient choice of mutually rivaling political leaders who can't stand the sight of each clambering over the other is at the root of an autocratic head in the party as well as in the government. Of course, there's the consideration of holding a political party together and queuing up behind the progeny of

an established leader to win an election.

The intolerance finds reflection through suppression of voice of dissent, dislike for criticism, even constructive one. A national leader cannot afford to entirely rely on his or her own channels of information which are adept in painting a picture to her liking. In the process, the chief executive of the country governs in a partisan and not a national way. She needs feedback from a third source, the intelligentsia and the media about which she is anything but charmed.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina without a blink of an eye told Wendy Sherman, US Under Secretary of State, 'just as BNP is participating in the mayoral elections, so it will in the general election, you will see.' How could the Prime Minister be so prescient almost as a clairvoyant that the opposition would fit into her design?

Is it a lollipop in a child's hand? Even a layman knows the difference between the local and national elections. Whilst the results of the former may be an indicator of incumbent party's popularity one way or the other, parliamentary elections are a game or power changer. National ballot is the peaceful means for transfer of power or retention of it for another term by the incumbent. The dice historically has not moved that way, though.

What comes through the prime minister's attitudinal statement is an attempted forcing down of an election in accord with the pre-set contrivances. She could care less about whether the opposition participated in it or not and if the government so formed will have legitimacy in the eye of the world.

Even results of polls held under non-partisan caretaker government since 1991 had been acceptable to the vanquished by turn. It goes without saying how monumental will be the distrust about the verdict of an election held under party government!

Street solution may leave a trail of martyrs we will have 'diboshes' on but it leads to a 'pedestrian' mechanism to deliver the result. The glaring example is that the parliament elected through the farcical poll on 15 February 1996 delivered the caretaker government system which we are re-fighting over. Both parties therefore have a lesson to draw from the confrontational trajectory they have set themselves on.

BNP has lost much of its earlier steam through some evident blunders. Its alignment with jihadi chetona (platform) of Jamaat-Hefajat-e Islam axis as opposed to liberation war chetona has somewhat de-characterised the party that one has known to have freedom fighters in its ranks and leadership positions.

The other misstep is the opposition's hartal calls even after having decided to join the budget session of parliament and already placed adjournment motions with JS secretariat demanding restoration of interim government to hold the next general election. The Speaker said she would have the motions moved in due course. Just cool it, make peace now, so the people do not feel suffocated as if in a compressed chamber, the major political parties have put them into.

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Not made in Bangladesh

HUMOROUSLY YOURS



NAVEED MAHBUB

AFTER two decades in the US, I return to Bangladesh -- as a recession refugee. People ask my parents, "What does Naveed do?" "Uh, uh, er... You know what? Our daughter has a PhD!"

Ok, ok... I can't JUST be a comedian. I interview for a faculty position.

The interviewer boasts, "We ONLY hire faculty members with foreign degrees!" Dhaka University IBA graduate? Sorry. Now here's a strong candidate -- MBA from the University of Madagascar, Antananarivo Campus! But you can't beat this superstar with an American degree! An MBA from the University of New York, Dhanmondi Campus! Smooch, smooch on the part of his anatomy where the sun doesn't shine.

Only faculty members with foreign degrees can guarantee international grade degrees. Therefore, graduates of this university are ideal candidates for faculty positions at their Alma Mater, as long as they go abroad to get another degree.

Thank goodness I have a University of Michigan MS. I'm hired. Not only that, I am also knighted -- everyone calls me 'sir.' But the pay is far from that of a knight.

So I go for a multinational company (MNC). I make a great discovery that would make Columbus green with envy -- Corporate Apartheid. It's white skin premium and brown skin discount. For the same job, an expat's compensation package is five times that of an equivalent local. Make that six times since Bangladesh is a 'hardship posting.' Yes it IS hard here for an expat -- don't have to wash the clothes, drive the car, cook, clean, do the dishes, mow the lawn (if you're lucky to have any). Hell, there's even someone to take the dog out for a walk. This poor guy looks forward to turning the corner and then immediately kicks the dog. Oh, it's also a fully furnished house in the tri-state area aka Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara aka the Green Zone with an ever obliging landlord. The sign did say, "For Rent -- Foreigners Only." So, the PM cannot

rent this house while a RAW agent gets the red carpet.

Back to the MNC. I tell HR, "I may not look like a foreigner, but I am a coconut -- brown outside, white inside." "Yes Mr. Naveed, you are indeed a coconut -- white inside, but hairy outside." We settle in between -- a 'local plus' package.

Everything flashes into sense. A club is truly elite when it sports the sign 'no local guests allowed.' There was initially a low spectator turnout during the BPL due to lack of foreign players. (Since Habib Wahid's concerts are sold out, he must be a foreigner). We wow at Andersen of Denmark, Elo Australia thekey Red Cow (remember Chernobyl?), Movenpick from Switzerland (in case you didn't know), California Fried Chicken, American Burger (as opposed to Peruvian Alpaca Burger).

What if you fail to get a franchise? Play the Sesame Street Letter Game. Introducing Batta, Rebok, Adidus, Hike, Souperman, Hairy Potter. Too lazy to play with words (or give a damn about lawsuits)? No problem. Welcome to Chilis, fly United, drop by at Comilla's own 7-Eleven.

But what if it's a local bridge? Fear not -- it was constructed using German engineering. No, no, not the engineering behind Auschwitz. You can rely on a local battery adhering to the British Standard Specification -- but do make it clear that it's not the old British Standard Specification where you get on a ship at Portsmouth, sail half way across the globe, make landfall and don't go home for 200 years.

Therefore, it makes perfect business sense to ensure it's as far as possible from being made in Bangladesh. Don't be a fool to start a school named Naveed's Tutorial. Nobody would touch this place with a ten foot pole. Call it Naveed's INTERNATIONAL Tutorial and people will fight with ten foot poles to get into a coaching center to get coached so as to be able to get into another coaching center which coaches them to get into Naveed's INTERNATIONAL Tutorial.

Proudly sporting my T-shirt Made in Bangladesh and my khakis Made AS France, I remain ever excited that many more people will read my columns with the skyrocketing subscription of The Daily Star...

The writer is an Engineer & CEO turned Comedian (by choice) and the host of NTV's Grameenphone Presents The Naveed Mahbub Show.

A PERSONAL TRIBUTE TO

Dr. Haldor Topsoe: Promoter of KAFCO

MD. MATIUL ISLAM

THE charismatic and legendary Dane, Dr. Haldor Topsoe, a researcher, an eminent scientist, an entrepreneur, an investor, an administrator and above all a philanthropist died in Copenhagen on May 20, 2013 -- 4 days short of his 100th Birthday which fell on 24th May 2013.

In 1978, at the age of 65, Dr. Topsoe, Chairman of SAS, came to Dhaka with a proposal to set up an export-oriented 1000/1725 metric tons per day ammonia-urea plant costing US\$ 500 million in the private sector in Bangladesh as a joint venture with the government. The plant would be built on a platform in Swedyard, a Swedish Shipyard, floated down the high seas, beached in Chittagong by the bank of River Karnaphuli and connected with the gas pipeline. The Swedish government's contribution of US\$ 250 million for the project on attractive terms channeled through Swedyard was a part of the deal. Dr. Topsoe produced the picture of a paper factory which was manufactured in Japan, floated down the Pacific, installed by the side of River Amazon in Brazil and was now in full production.

As Secretary, Ministry of Industries, I was convinced about the soundness of the proposal, its financing arrangement and promptly issued a letter of intent extending GOB support for the project. This was the beginning of a long and arduous negotiating process which finally resulted in the signing of the Promoters Agreement of the Karnaphuli Fertilizer Company in Washington, DC on December 01, 1981 at the Headquarter of IFC. Each of the 3 parties, namely, GOB, Swedyard and Haldor Topsoe, agreed to contribute one-third of the equity. The agreement stipulated that a separate Gas Supply Contract for the plant has to be negotiated with the relevant Ministry of the Government. IFC also indicated its willingness to participate in the project.

I left the government to join UNIDO in Vienna in the latter part of December 1981 satisfied that the project was on course for successful completion and accepted Dr.



Standing from left: Syeduzzaman, Alternate ED, Jamaluddin, Dy. PM, Stephansen, Director & Parmar, VP, IFC; Sitting from left: Wessberg, CEO, Swedyards, the author and Dr. Haldor Topsoe.

Topsoe's long standing invitation to visit Copenhagen during the course of a month long holiday in Europe with my wife and children in the summer of 1982.

Unfortunately, the project suffered a serious set back on the question raised by IFC of the hazards of the sea and the inherent risk of losing the US\$ 500 million project during the course of the long sea journey from Sweden to Chittagong. IFC backed out of the project and along with it, the fundamental basis of Swedish assistance also fell through. Undaunted, Dr. Topsoe changed the whole concept, made it a shore-based fertilizer plant and organized a consortium of foreign investors with OECF, Marubeni, Chioda, CDC, IFU and his own company and went ahead with the implementation of the project which in 1994 saw the light of the day.

I have seen and known Dr. Haldor Topsoe as an entrepreneur with a vision but little knew about his scientific achievements for which he was better known to the rest of the world. His passion for science was as intense as his deter-



The author with Dr. Topsoe in 2011

mination to create new institutions and profitable ventures. Founded in 1940 as a modest venture for fundamental research on catalysis, Haldor Topsoe A/S, headquartered in Ravnholm in Denmark, has presence in 10 countries across 5 continents. Haldor Topsoe A/S catalysts are now used in the production of 50% of the world's fertilizers, helping the agricultural industry meet the global demand for food.

Apart from being the Chairman of SAS, he was a Board Member of IBM and a member of the US Population Council. Dr. Topsoe was made a Knight of the Grand Cross of the Dannebrog Order in 2008 for his outstanding contribution to business. His Knighthood included the design of a new coat of arms for the Topsoe family.

In 2011, at the age of 98, Dr. Topsoe paid a visit to Dhaka and raised with the Prime Minister Hasina the proposal for a second KAFCO and also laid the foundation for a residential school complex for underprivileged children which he was constructing at Sreepur, on the outskirts of Dhaka. It was during this visit that I had the privilege of meeting him

again after a long gap of 30 years at a dinner at the residence of the Danish Ambassador.

A big celebration was planned on the occasion of his 100th birthday in Copenhagen beginning 16th May and culminating on 24th May which was his actual birthday. As the guests started descending upon Copenhagen, the old man, weakened by a bout of pneumonia, tripped, broke his hip bone and underwent an emergency surgery. The gala dinner for about 500 guests which included the Queen, the Prime Minister, members of the cabinet and other dignitaries and also a symposium on "Global Social and Scientific Challenges" in which the Prime Minister and Director General of WTO Mr. Pascal Lamy were guest speakers, were cancelled. Dr. Topsoe's immediate family members organized a get-together and dinner for 100 or so foreign guests. With a heavy heart, my wife and I returned back to Dhaka. Finally, Dr. Topsoe succumbed to his age and injury and died peacefully on 20th May 2013.

During his long life, Haldor Topsoe made significant contribution to the world in terms of technological and scientific innovation which improved the lives of millions across the world. In Topsoe's own words: "The corporate world in itself means nothing unless it improves the lives of people and the conditions in poor countries."

Yet, he left many tasks unfinished. A month before his death, he visited Myanmar with a proposal for a gas based urea fertilizer plant. His proposal to Prime Minister Hasina for a second KAFCO was still under GOB examination. He would be missed on the occasion of the opening of the home he built in Sreepur for the underprivileged children scheduled for October 2013. Also, remained unfulfilled his desire, expressed in his last communication to me: "I should be grateful to know what you are involved in now -- maybe we could do something together -- again."

The Author is the recipient of the prestigious The Daily Star-DHL Lifetime Achievement Award

ACROSS

- Netting
- Raw rock
- Personal question
- Grouch
- Liniment
- Target
- Chop
- Firetruck need
- Barbecue fuel
- One side of the Urals
- Glutton
- Prune
- Skill
- Police officer
- Has potential
- Should, with "to"
- Assail persistently
- Entreaty
- "Delish!"
- Small wagon
- Breast-bone
- "It's mine!"
- Diving bird
- Two, in Tijuana

38 Pamphlet
41 Raw rock
42 Pair of performers

4 The girl
5 Shout
6 Jalopy
7 It gives a hoot

46 Entrancing
48 Teen's woe
49 Ginormous
50 Eastern bigwig (Var.)
51 Equal
52 "Help!"
53 Maravich of basketball lore

3 Carpet type
4 The girl
5 Shout
6 Jalopy
7 It gives a hoot
8 Monstrous whirlpool of myth
9 Parks of civil rights fame
10 "Yeah, at-home"
11 Defeat
16 Coagulate
20 Rotating part

21 Role
22 Otto-

40 Top-rated
41 Major U.S. river
42 FDR's on it
43 One
44 Shrek, for instance
46 Letterman's employer
47 Paper equivalent of a GPS?

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51 52 53

CRYPTOQUIP

AZDWNYE LG MCLDC WCXE
DYZGV NTW HLAAXYXGW
OYNHTDQW N QTOONYW WCX
RNMXY JZDV: Z RTSJZY SLRR.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip
I WASN'T SPEAKING ABOUT THAT LARGE, SWAMPY LAKE OUTLET NEAR ME. I MEANT THE BAYOU BYYOU.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: W equals T

BEETLE BAILY

I WANT TO BE REMEMBERED AS A KINDLY, CARING AND THOUGHTFUL LEADER

I'M SURE YOU WILL BE, SIR

HENRY

TRY NOT TO SOIL YOUR SHIRT TODAY, HENRY!

9-7

by Mort Walker

JUST TO BE SURE, PUT THAT IN THE FORM OF AN ORDER

9-7

by Don Trachte

10 CRE

QUOTABLE Quotes

"Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony."

Mahatma Gandhi