

"Living one life in two countries"

ZARINA NAHAR KABIR

A columnist in *The Daily Star* recently gave an apt description of many like me who are "living one life in two countries". 'We' are those who have migrated from our country, yet cannot give up the ties with our roots. We are so entwined by the umbilical cord of our motherland that it pulls us back for reasons that can only be in one's self-interest of being further nourished, as a child demands of her mother. We enjoy the material comfort of the migrated land but crave for the caring embrace of the nation that raised us during our childhood. Why do we suffer this dilemma? Why can we not settle with the decision we made decades ago of leaving behind family, friends, home and everything that is comfortingly familiar? I am yet to come up with a satisfactory answer to the question.

Yes, it is a privilege to live one life in two countries if only one can. It's a prized rarity to enjoy the best of two nations. However most often, it is a split between family responsibility and loyalty to one's own soul. For many, it is a situation that deprives them of enjoying one of the basic expectations of life: to work and live where one wants to, yet share the same geographical space with one's own family. For most people, migration is hardly rosy, whether it is within the country or crossing borders and oceans. For the majority, it is a matter of survival, the push factors behind migration being either economic or political. At the end of the day, it is an outcome of the failure of the State to provide the preconditions for its citizens to live a financially stable life and/or in safety, free of social, religious or political persecution. According to



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European countries suggest higher rates of schizophrenia amongst immigrants (even after controlling for political refugee status) compared to nationals. It is interesting how two sides of the same coin can be perceived so differently: the emigrant in her homeland with the strength of earning hard foreign currency and enjoying a life of comfort, and the vulnerable immigrant in the recipient country experiencing social adversity in terms of employment, living conditions and social exclusion, thus impacting mental health.

Coming back to being split between two countries, physically living in one and spiritually dwelling in the country of one's origin, I would like to draw attention to channelling such predicament into a positive force for our nation. Late last year, the Director-General of the World Health Organisation reminded delegates at an international conference of the benefits of migration, that of "bringing new ideas and an energetic and highly motivated workforce". Bangladesh is a country that welcomes foreign skills with open arms. Private universities employ foreigners to promote an international image. Businesses are routinely importing foreign labour. Consulting firms seek out foreigners to help attract consultancies who are generally hired by donor organisations, consequently channelling back their own funding outside Bangladesh. Maybe it is time for Bangladesh to contemplate reverse migration by bringing home its own skilled workforce from abroad and get a return on the investment she made in nurturing her progeny.

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World Bank data, Bangladesh was the third largest country with a negative net migration (immigration minus emigration) during 2011-15, after Syria and India. In Syria, around four million people were driven from their country as a result of political conflict over the period (currently, the figure is roughly five million); more than 2.2 million people emigrated from Bangladesh for a better economic future. This has given the nation an income of more than \$15 billion in the form of personal remittances during the fiscal year 2014-

2015 alone.

Let's take a moment to focus on possible experiences of the individuals behind the statistics from a mental health perspective. Researchers (Bhugra D, *Acta Psychiatr Scand* 2004, 109: 243-258) point out that migration is not simply a one-off phase but a series of events often spanning over a long period of time, starting with the pre-migration stage which possibly determines whether the move is voluntary or forced. A literature review of scientific research on migration and

mental health in Europe (Carta et al., *Clinical Practice and Epidemiology in Mental Health*, 2005, 1:13) refers to the psychiatry of migration as a grieving process, experienced over time and causing anguish. The process is described to include seven major losses: family and friends, language, culture, homeland, loss of status and contact with the ethnic group, and finally exposure to physical risks. The process is, of course, far more complex for those fleeing persecution of any kind. Epidemiological studies in different

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Trump, Hillary advance; Republicans at wits' end

ASHFAQUE SWAPAN

THE long Republican Party nightmare continued on March 15, as the garish real estate tycoon Donald Trump edged over rivals in three states for the party nomination for presidential elections in November, delighting his cult-like fans and striking the fear of God in party insiders. In Florida, Trump trounced a local man, Senator Marco Rubio, by nearly 20 percentage points, forcing Rubio to quit the race. Texas Senator Ted Cruz came in second in several states, but is substantially behind Trump. Ohio Gov. John Kasich won his home state in Ohio, his first victory at such a late stage that it's now mathematically impossible for him to win the race. Kasich desperately hopes that Trump will fail to win a majority and a brokered party convention will figure out a nominee.

As for the Democratic Party, former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton waltzed to victories in four states over populist candidate Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, with one state too close to call. For the grassroots activist, it was a far cry from what he needed as he is already behind. Clinton is now the prohibitive favorite.

Yet the Sanders campaign has been able to create a magic that the Clinton campaign has not. The quirky senator's diatribes against economic inequality and the power of Wall Street banks and plutocrats have struck a chord with young people. If Clinton is the eventual Democratic nominee, she will have to find a way to somehow harness that enthusiasm and passion.

"If his only goal is to win the nomination, then it might be time for him to call it quits," *The New Republic* magazine commented. "But if his goal is to remake the Democratic Party by creating a powerful faction to the left of Clinton, then Sanders has every reason to stay until the end—and doing so could help Clinton defeat the likely Republican nominee, Donald Trump."

"As Sanders said in his speech... his campaign has 'defied all expectations.' This is undeniable. Clinton had the advantage of name recognition, endorsements from party officials, and ready access to wealthy donors. Still, a 74-year-old democratic socialist from Vermont has beaten Clinton in nine states, and the election calendar suggests he could win even a few more in the

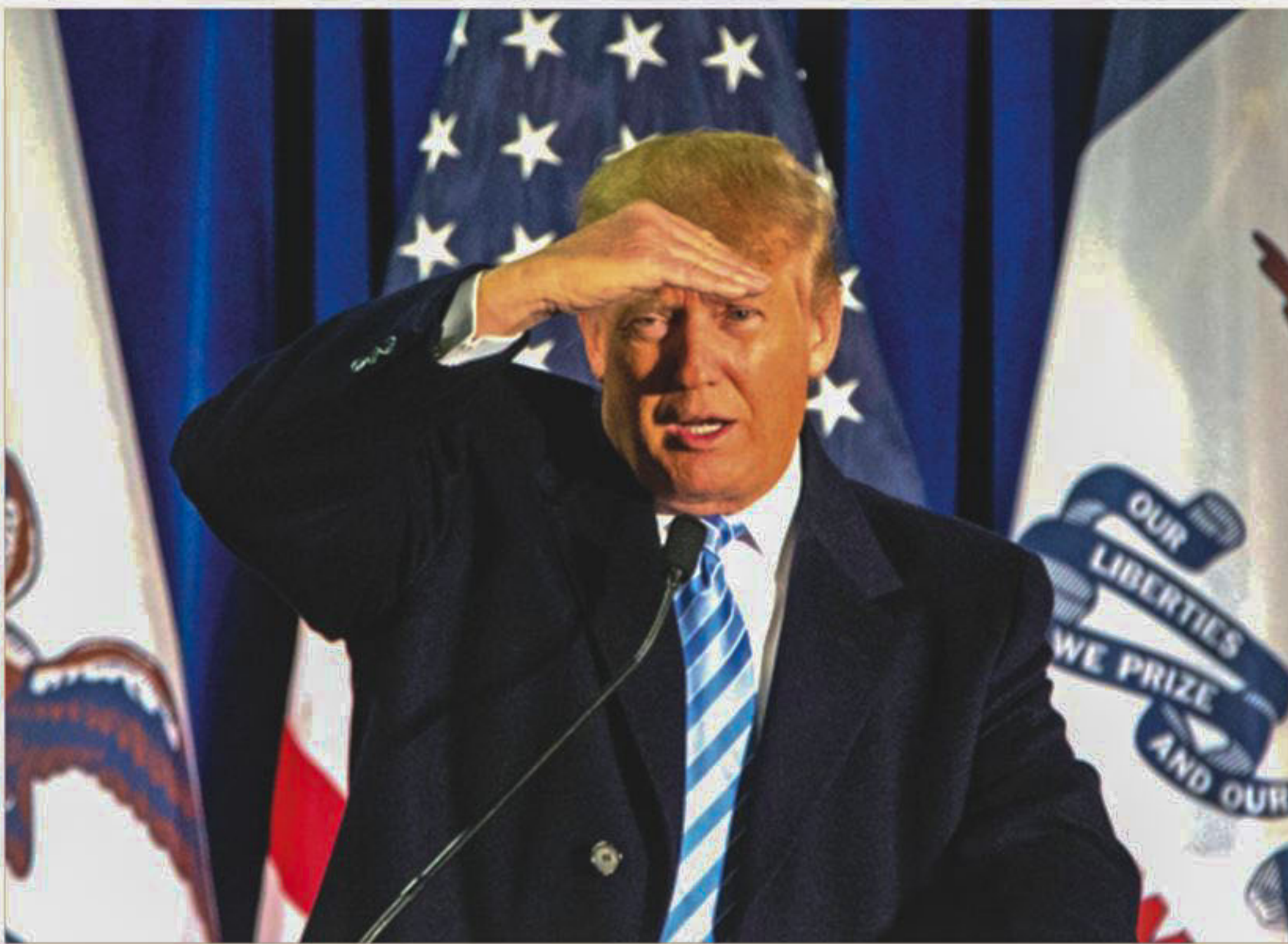


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coming weeks." The Republican Party, on the other hand, is a sorry mess. The rise of Trump threatens to tear the party apart, with many within the party and the conservative activist community refusing to support him. Yet Trump's supporters, who form a substantial part of the Republican Party base, will cry bloody murder if their candidate is somehow removed by an insider coup.

As for Trump, the coarsening of political discourse by this media-savvy, know-nothing narcissistic blowhard is perhaps his most terrible legacy. While the last Republican debate mercifully returned to some semblance of propriety, its earlier version—where Rubio took on Trump—descended into a shouting match and exchange of personal insults.

Rubio later took it a step further, and the subsequent exchanges with lewd allusions are unprecedented in recent political campaigns.

Trump has flouted conventions in many ways. At a recent press conference in his exclusive Mar-a-lago Club, journalists were bemused to find stacks of Trump Water, Trump Wine and so-called Trump Steaks on display, making the presentation look like a late night television infomercial. It turns out that the last Republican presidential nominee, former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, had publicly lambasted Trump for being a business failure. Famously thin-skinned, Trump provided proof to anybody who would listen that it was not true—here was the proof. (As is Trump's wont, he was being economical with the truth—it later transpired that Trump Winery has no relation with Donald Trump, and Trump Steaks have long been discontinued. The packaged steaks on display were from a local supplier.)

There has been controversy about Trump "University," with Trump facing a class-action lawsuit over scamming people with false promises.

Trump, of course, denies everything.

But what has become impossible to deny is the growing, sinister threat of violence surrounding Trump's boisterous rallies. A protester has been hit by a Trump supporter while being escorted out. A reporter recently alleged that Trump's campaign manager yanked her arm so hard that she has bruises. Trump's rally in Chicago had to be cancelled after huge protests.

Appalled Republican Party insiders are desperate for an alternative. Their previous attempts have all bitten the dust—Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, former Florida Governor Jeb Bush, and in a final gasp, Rubio.

Now the only viable alternative is the shrill, doctrinaire and insufferably self-righteous Ted Cruz, who is so universally loathed in the US Senate that late in his campaign, he has been endorsed by only one US Senator: Mike Lee of Utah.

South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham warned in January that nominating Trump or Cruz could prove fatal for his party. "It's like being shot or poisoned. What does it really matter?" Graham said.

Yet many critics say the Republican Party has brought this upon itself with decades of veiled race-baiting and extreme, hyperbolic attacks on their political adversaries.

David Remnick, editor of *The New Yorker* magazine, recently wrote: "The (Republican Party) establishment may be in a state of meltdown, but this process of exploiting the darkest American undercurrents began with Richard Nixon's Southern Strategy and, more lately, has included the birther movement and the Obama Derangement Syndrome. Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz, who compete hard for the most extreme positions in conservatism, decry the viciousness and the vacuousness of Trump, but they started out by deferring to him—and now they ape his vulgarity in a last-ditch effort to keep pace. Insults. Bigotry. Nationally televised assurances of adequate genital dimensions. This is the political moment in which we live. The Republican Party, having spent years courting the basest impulses in American political culture, now sees the writing on the wall. It reads 'Donald Trump,' in very big letters."

The writer has been a reporter and an editor for over 25 years for the weekly newspaper *India-West*, based in California, USA.

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QUOTABLE Quote

RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHANSA

Travel in all the four quarters of the earth, yet you will find nothing anywhere. Whatever there is, is only here.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Rotisserie part
- 5 Mall unit
- 9 What X sometimes means
- 11 Midwest airport
- 12 Unescorted
- 13 Food of the gods
- 14 Great weight
- 15 Cheese choice
- 17 Cheese choice
- 19 "... been swell!"
- 20 Milling seat
- 21 Compass dir.
- 22 Secret meeting
- 24 Spots on TV
- 26 Lion features
- 29 Parisian pal
- 30 Cheese choice
- 32 Cheese choice
- 34 Operated
- 35 Choir member
- 36 Vent cover
- 38 Reviewer Roger
- 39 Restaurant patron
- 40 Steak choice

DOWN

- 1 Baseball card data
- 2 Cockpit occupants
- 3 "Right away, boss"
- 4 Kayo count
- 5 Herring's kin
- 6 Submit
- 7 Decorative
- 8 Fruit basket items
- 10 Region
- 11 Portent
- 16 Lama, e.g.
- 18 A bunch
- 21 Sicilian volcano
- 23 Wild
- 24 One-celled organism
- 25 Sit-down affair
- 27 Book goofs
- 28 Declares
- 29 Following
- 30 Jazz great Al
- 31 Sluggish
- 33 Went fast
- 37 Drake's music

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

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

BETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker

BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott