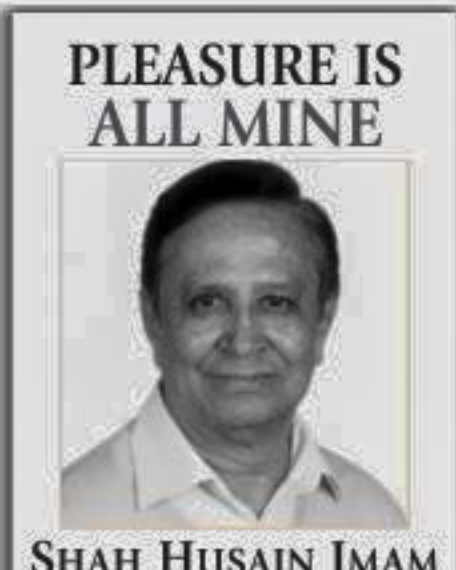


# The race for the White House is heating up



SHAH HUSAIN IMAM

**B**RAWN, brain and tears sum up the tone, temper and texture of the Republican and Democrat national conventions in Cleveland and Philadelphia respectively. The fiesta, patriotic fervour, quiet but eloquent sobbing, depth of speaker line-up and storytelling presentations fleshed out with anecdotes were the

this in part may have also been actuated by a desire to create a vote bank by way of influence-peddling. Some of the contestations in the primaries were taken to the national conventions. Ted Cruz who refused to endorse Trump in the convention had to be booed out by "Trump", "Trump" yells. By comparison, the intensity of passion and level of sophistication exuded by Bernie Sanders in his adversarial posture towards Hillary Clinton were way above the crudity and humiliation traded between Trump camp and Ted Cruz. It is a huge add-on to the electoral culture that Bernie with his Left predilections and for all his

Sanders gave a resounding endorsement for it: "Based on her ideas and her leadership—Hillary Clinton must become the next president of the United States. I am proud to stand with her..." Powerful endorsement speeches intelligently crafted to cut corners were delivered by party big wigs, former high public office holders, iconic figures, vice presidential nominees, let alone spouses, sons and daughters of the candidates. It is a participatory inner party democracy opening out to a broad spectrum representative system, largely backed by money and served by merit that projects the strength of the US as we know it.

mirror-image of American electoral democracy in action. Beneath the dazzling tapestry, however, likability and trust issues dog the steps of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton even as they have secured nomination for the US presidential election in November. An intensely polarizing campaign now sees a new twist, some say an escalation, to the email scandal centred around the use of a personal server by the former secretary of state. One would have thought we had seen the back of it after the FBI investigations. The probe while alluding to a serious lapse of responsibility had ruled out prosecution against her. The Democrat camp has lately accused Trump of inciting Russian 'espionage', a suggestion Moscow had earlier vigorously denied. Republicans are out to whip up a national security concern apparently in desperation over the steady ship of Democrat candidacy.

Women of the Movement for Care representing the victims of gun shots were present at the penultimate phase of the Democratic convention extending their support to Hillary. Her gun control policy found a resonance with them. Simultaneously, the results of Millennial Youth Research were revealed from the podium highlighting the vulnerabilities of Black youths vis-à-vis their White counterparts.

Both the presidential tickets look considerably revamped by the choice of governor Pence and senator Tim Paine as vice president running mates of Trump and Hillary respectively. Tim in particular, sounds competent to be officiating the president on a short notice.

Remember, the primaries were hard-fought, precisely, on two levels: First, between the principal candidates and secondly the challengers within the parties battling it out to basically fathom their chances. Chiefly motivated to resist a frontrunner;



PHOTO: ORCHARD

support base among young men and women by virtue of his commitment to social and economic justice and equal opportunities has proved a statesman of no small measure. Although he let his differences with Clinton go down to the wires, he pulled back in time to retain his clout to negotiate a deal with her on projects close to his heart as well as extend the much-needed support to her at the nick of time.

It took 134 years since the American independence for women to be voters; nearly a century is passing us by from that watershed moment with a historic responsibility devolving on the US electorate to have their first woman president. After breaking the jinx of a non-white president, it is turn for a woman incumbent in the White House.

The stakes are high in a Democratic win and so

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# Facing the worst possible scenario

MANZOOR AHMED

**H**OW can a child turn into a monster to create random horror, death and self-destruction is a thought most people recoil from. Yet this has become a reality in today's world.

Many were ace students in elite schools and top performers at the university. Bright future was theirs for the asking. Some were talented in creative fields as musicians and singers. Others were already young professionals as engineers, doctors, IT specialists. Still others were not as privileged - average youngsters in a madrasa or a regular institution - but they too were seized by a rage or despair or a promise of a quick heavenly utopia.

It is not an exclusive domain of the male. Young women from UK, France, Australia and USA found ways of escaping from their families and friends to travel to Syria and Iraq to join the Islamic State jihadists. Defying the confining circumstances for girls in Bangladesh and South Asia, some managed to become active partisans in jihadist activities.

The Holy Artisan Café victims in Dhaka were killed by the young assailants apparently because they were foreigners or non-Muslims though three Bangladeshi Muslims were also not spared. The attackers were particularly brutal towards the women victims.

A 17-year-old Afghan refugee, armed with a knife and an axe, injured several people in a train in Bavaria, Southern Germany, including four of a family of visitors from Hong Kong. The teenager who had come to Germany alone without his family lived in a foster family. He was shot dead by police.

In Munich, 18-year-old Ali Sonboly, of Iranian origin, but born and raised in Germany, tried to lure young people through facebook to gather at MacDonalds' restaurant and killed nine including children aiming

shots at their face. Police found in Ali's room a book titled "Rampage in my mind - why students kill people." He was reported to be a fan of Norwegian mass murderer Anders Breivik who, in 2011, detonated a bomb in a crowded Oslo street killing nine, and then shot 69 participants of a workers' youth league summer camp.

What statement were they making except to vent a rage that they could not explain, a desperation they felt deeply but could not express, engulfing frustration that they could not quite fathom? So they lashed out viciously, inflicting cruelty and pain randomly, destroying their victims as well as themselves.

*The Holy Artisan Café victims in Dhaka were killed by the young assailants apparently because they were foreigners or non-Muslims though three Bangladeshi Muslims were also not spared. The attackers were particularly brutal towards the women victims.*

The flip side of it is what appears to be an increase in cruelty to children and sadistic ways children are punished and even killed - tying a child to a post and beating him to death with bystanders watching and even taking a video; killing a child by blowing pressurised air from an air pump into his rectum; scalding a child domestic help with boiling oil because she displeased her mistress in some way.

When children grow up in the midst of war and conflict, become refugees or do not have a family, one can see a cause for deviant conduct. Thankfully, even in these extreme circumstances, the numbers turning to self-destructive behaviour are very small. Then, what

can be said for those being raised in a family guided by their parents in an apparently normal circumstance, but turning to irrational extremism?

Technology has quickened the pace of life and has intensified communication. A sense of entitlement, resentment about injustice, expectations in life, possibilities of what can happen, and complexities about how identities are defined have all been amplified by the unprecedented reach of communication technology.

When big powers unleash their wars and create mayhem without planning the end game or considering the full consequences, as in Iraq and

democracy, rule of law, and people's welfare, a positive view of future is damaged severely.

These are conditions, their impact magnified vastly by non-stop communication, cannot be controlled or influenced directly by individuals and families. Mercifully, young people, despite the extreme provocation, who turn to irrational extremism, are a tiny fraction. However, the mayhem even this small proportion can cause is tragically too evident.

What can individuals and families, at least in the sphere of raising and guiding children, do? The human child is more dependent for their survival and growth on adult care than any other living being. Do we do what should be and can be done in care, guidance, affection, love as well as providing for physical, mental, social, emotional and ethical growth and development of the young child? Unlimited indulgence and a lavish supply of toys, gifts, tablets and smartphones are not the answer.

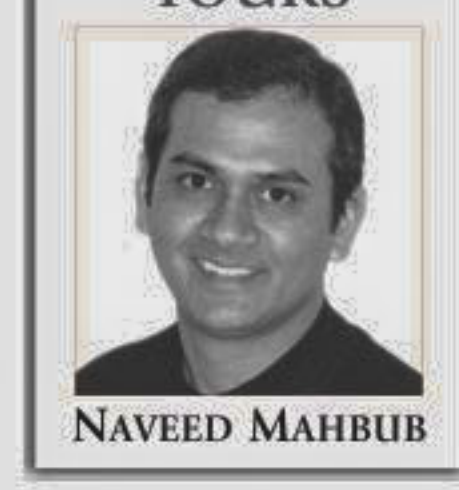
Researcher and science writer Jonah Lehrer points to a startling research evidence. In "A Book about Love" (Simon & Schuster, 2015), he reports that children who do not form strong attachment and bonds in childhood with their parents are twice more likely to "discover" religion as adults as an emotional anchor or a base of certainty. This itself is not a problem. The problem arises when some of these "born again" believers are confused, go too far and turn to irrational extremism.

There is no formula or recipe for love. As parents and adults in the family, we must have the time, patience and commitment to listen to our children, give them care and affection, recognise their individuality, and find ample time for them. We must also reconsider our values and goal in life.

The writer is chair of Bangladesh Early Childhood Network (BEN) and professor emeritus at BRAC University.

# The Big Bang Theory

HUMOROUSLY YOURS



NAVEED MAHBUB

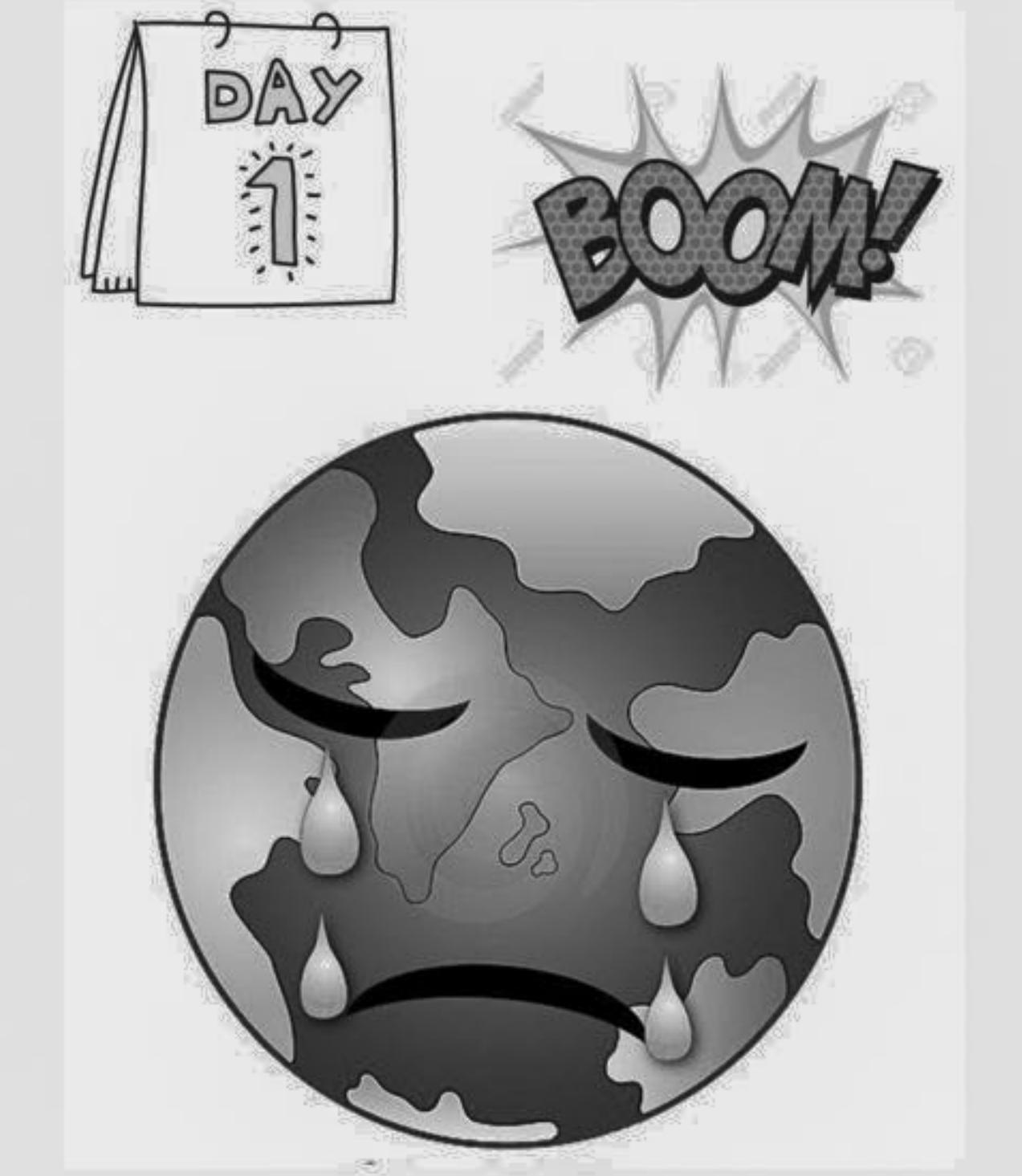
**I** thought I was on a direct flight from Kuala Lumpur to Dhaka. But turns out there are two stops - the baggage claim area at Dhaka Airport and Azampur, Uttara. Each eats up an additional two hours. But I happily accept the first 'stop' as it shows business as usual in Dhaka, a city that has changed forever since July 1. The second, a new addition due to heightened security with all vehicles exiting Dhaka Airport having to make a U-turn at Azampur, Uttara, is an inconvenience that I am happy to embrace as long as there is no more Holey or Sholakra.

I just hope we don't miss the U-turn point, as that means the next break in the road divider is at Chapai Nawabganj. For once, the horrible traffic jam on Airport Road looks like one giant, benign, peaceful and even welcoming parking lot with a zillion vehicles 'parked' in perfect order and even better, having to pay no parking fees. The normal Dhaka traffic and its fifty shades of smog never looked so wonderful.

I then enter the 'green zone', aka, Gulshan which makes airport security pale into insignificance. My car gets a thorough check by courteous security personnel as I cooperate to the fullest.

Once I enter Gulshan, it's déjà vu of the original residential Gulshan with its desolate streets. The staff of even one popular hangout on Gulshan Avenue hangs out on the street with no work inside. Making a reservation at a restaurant in the 'Tri-State Area' (Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara) used to be "Too many people there? Can you please squeeze in a table for two?". Now it's "Too many people there? Uhm. Thank you!" and then calling up Hungry Naki.

I finally reach home and after some quality time with the family, I switch on the TV. TV is no longer 'Tele Vision, but rather 'Tele Violence. Whichever TV channel I tune into, there's the omnipresent and almost expected violence - movies with gory scenes, talk shows with volleys of verbal missiles, cartoons with Jerry beating up Tom since animation was invented, Animal Planet with the cheetah in hot pursuit of the gazelle, even CNN Headline News with the daily dose of reporting on global violence (CNN should be rated 'R'). Hook up your Wii to the TV and it's war games.



Just two days of lull since I'm back in town. And then Operation Storm 26. Only a question of time before IS (if not already) claims the young men as franchisees. An enviable position to be in - a 'brand' so well 'established' that even if an incident is 'local' or 'isolated', IS can always claim responsibility and score major points against its arch rival Al Qaeda. IS may soon retroactively claim credits for all the Kamikaze raids.

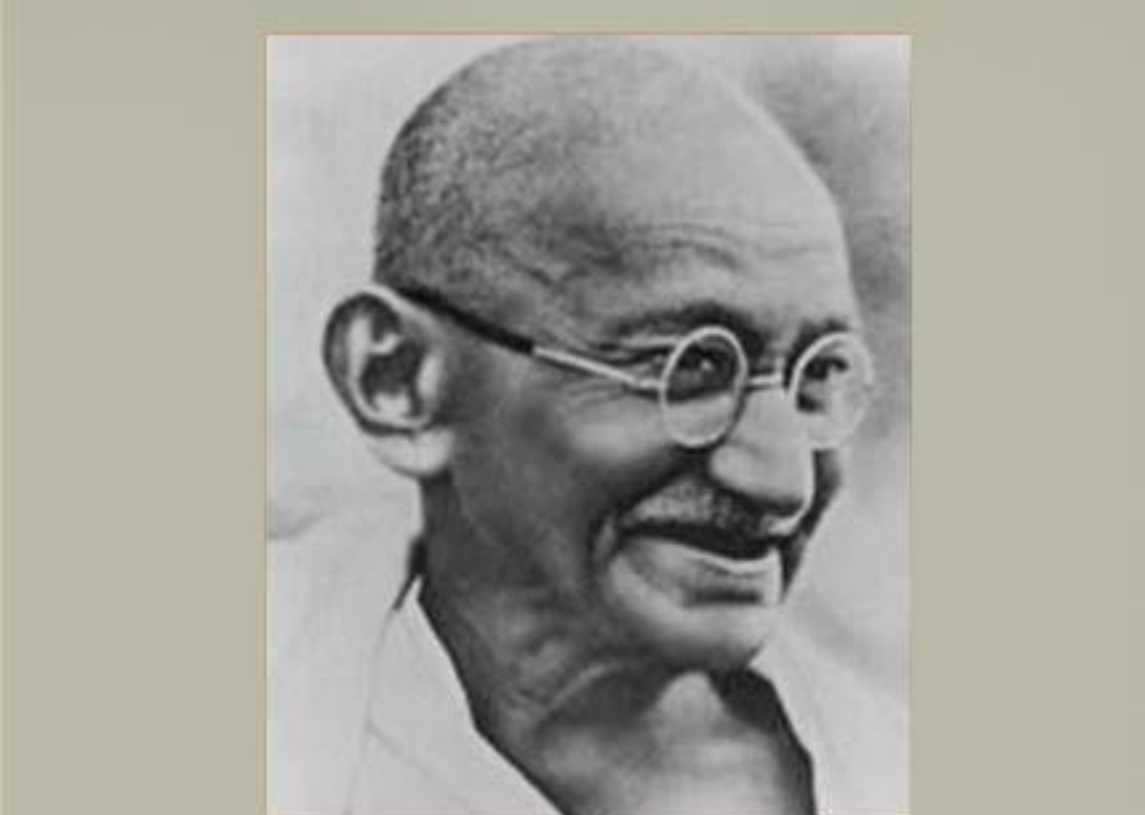
Meanwhile, landlords are rounded up for not submitting information on their deadly tenants. Soon everyone in the long supply chain of sophisticated arms and munitions, starting from the source manufacturer to all the middlemen in between will be rounded up as being abettors to the crime called terrorism.

And so, Gulshan is eventually becoming a self-imposed Guantanamo, while, "see you later" turns from a guarantee to a hope and "stay safe" turns from a casual good bye to a game of Russian Roulette.

Oh, Rajinikanth, where are you? I thought you once 'took care' of a terrorist merely with Bluetooth while whistling in five languages. For that matter, oh peace, where art thou? Then again, have we ever really had world peace? After all, some say that it all started with the Big 'Bang' Theory...

The writer is an engineer at Ford & Qualcomm USA and CEO of IBM & Nokia Siemens Networks Bangladesh turned comedian (by choice), the host of ABC Radio's Good Morning Bangladesh and the founder of Naveed's Comedy Club. E-mail: naveed@naveedmahbub.com

## QUOTABLE Quote



MAHATMA GANDHI

You must be the change you wish to see in the world.

## CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- |                          |                                      |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>ACROSS</b>            | <b>DOWN</b>                          |
| 1 Deliberate             | 1 Nautical pole                      |
| 5 Loss weight            | 2 River through Nantes               |
| 10 Anti-theftal          | 3 Bygone                             |
| 12 Principle             | 4 Funny fellow                       |
| 13 Carduroy feature      | 5 Sax great Getz                     |
| 14 Furious               | 6 Give for a bit                     |
| 15 Fury                  | 7 Thankless person                   |
| 16 Vine growth           | 8 Deserved                           |
| 18 Court activity        | 9 Did salon work                     |
| 20 Eroded                | 11 No longer working                 |
| 21 Bear in the air       | 17 Snaky shape                       |
| 23 Seth Mac-Farlanc film | 19 Convent resident                  |
| 24 Muse comic            | 22 Climbs                            |
| 26 Ignored the limit     | 24 Short book                        |
| 28 Market indicator      | 25 Words from a would-be participant |
| 29 Backgammon need       | 27 Signing need                      |
| 31 Juan Peron's wife     | 28 Sense                             |
| 32 Muscle connector      | 30 Skater Midri                      |
| 36 Strain                | 33 Impetus                           |
| 39 Deplore               | 34 External                          |
| 40 Rocker John           | 35 Must have                         |
| 41 Hackneyed             | 37 Punch                             |
| 43 Mouse activity        | 38 Printer's supplies                |
| 44 Was frugal            | 42 Stadium cry                       |
| 45 Battle vehicles       |                                      |
| 46 Towel word            |                                      |



YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

LOADED | DED | ANGED | ENCORE | DIVA | GETS IN | OVEN | EYEORE | PATS | ZEBRA | OAK | NOODLES | RDA | IAN | OTT | SPECTRE | ORE | ETHER | ODORE | ENOUGH | ALAS | MOANED | PERU | PAROLE | ROTS | STARIN

## BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker



## BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott

