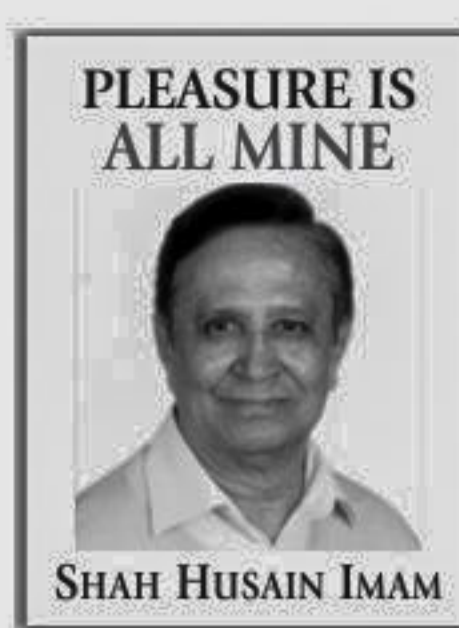


# Hillary-Trump slanging matches from the ringside

*Next Monday, we will see the first of the three debates that are billed to bring out the best in the two candidates' competency, knowledge, leadership qualities and abilities to defend their policy positions, plans and visions for their incumbency.*



SHAH HUSAIN IMAM

**PLEASURE IS ALL MINE**

ONLY a month ago, one would have thought that Hillary Clinton could have a cake walk to the White House as the next Democrat President of the United States of America. But in the last two weeks or so, Trump has gained from the rear, bridging the gap with Hillary. Where the ex-secretary of state only four weeks back was 8 to 12 percent ahead in public support from her Republican rival, they are now running neck-to-neck.

Even so, most pundits argue that regardless of fluctuations in the public opinion, at the end of the day, electoral votes will have the last word. Thus, a foundational check and balance has been introduced into the election to the office of the US presidency. Based on an electoral college system, a candidate must clinch at least 270 electoral votes to secure victory.

Many wise hats would much rather err on the side of caution: In the states of Ohio, Iowa and Florida, where Trump was deemed to be trailing behind Hillary, he seems to have edged ahead lately.

"A week is too long for politics," Harold Wilson, a former British Prime Minister, had once said, given the highly mercurial political barometre of his times. It warns against dilly-dally in politics that could make potentially effective options slip away, being overtaken by intrusive of distraction, if not worse.

If, however, that was a benchmark for being in step with the pace of



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politics five decades ago, what could be the benchmark for intensification of the US presidential election campaigns in this cyber age? Already, some six weeks have passed since the post-primary selection of candidates; and this has brought in some highly charged, even no-holds-barred incendiary elements to the electoral discourses across a broad spectrum. If this is the foretaste of things to come in the remaining run-up to the election, we are staring at an exciting, edifying little- less -than six weeks of the US high drama with the world's eyes transfixed on it.

Meanwhile, we have had a rather premature assurance from Nisa Desai Biswal, the US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Mid-Asia Region: Whoever comes to power in the US presidential election, there will be 'no change in their foreign policy'; and furthermore, she thinks it will also have no impact on US-Bangladesh relations. It is good to hear that the US values Bangladesh's socio-economic successes, its prospects, and its commitments to fight extremism.

She obviously gave the assurance, sensing some apprehensions that the poll result may alter the scenario for better or worse for Bangladesh. How much of what she says is rhetoric and how much will be proved in kind, one has to wait and watch which way it pans out. But insofar as we are concerned, we are not looking for just status quo but improvement in specific areas.

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The principal issues to be debated are clear-cut and what's more, they are live raring to be addressed: National security, terrorism, immigration and trade. The first two have come to the fore, one might say, in a tale-tell coincidence and at a wrong time for the Democrat platform. On a closer look, it is as well that these have come about to be testing the rationality of the candidates' stance on the subject.

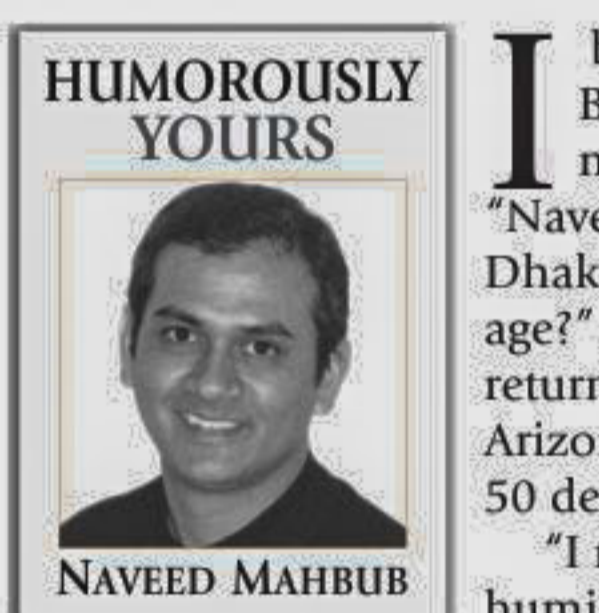
After the Orlando carnage, bomb attacks in New York and New Jersey will be ammunition in the hand of Trump against his opponent. Trump blames it out on "weak policies" of the Obama administration, including on gun control. Hillary counters her adversary, saying that he is inciting ISIS. But the killing of another Black person by the police and the hurting of a protester

have racial overtones that play out against Trump.

The connection between immigration and terrorism is oversimplistic on Trump's part as his threat of a 'trade war' with China has earned him "F" credit in economics from Nobel laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz.

The writer is a contributor of The Daily Star.

## Yo Homie!



NAVEED MAHBUB

**HUMOROUSLY YOURS**

I bump into a fellow Bangladeshi on board my flight to the US. "Naveed, it's so hot in Dhaka! How do you manage?" Asks the man who's returning to Phoenix, Arizona to a temperature of 50 degrees Celsius.

"I manage. With the humidity, I treat it as a free sauna."

He adds: "I was in Dhaka for two weeks, couldn't take it anymore. How can you live there now?"

"Well, the same way you lived there before you moved to the US."

It is the pride of the Dhaka-ite, the Chittagong-ite, the Sylhet-ite, ... the Bangladeshi. I live here, and I will criticise it. You don't live here, you DON'T criticise it in front of me. That's the lopsided, but the 'homie' logic.

A different flight at a different time - my Northwest Airlines plane is taxiing at Frankfurt Airport after its long flight from Detroit. Tired, but excited, I nudge my still dozing American colleague next to me, "Look! That's from Bangladesh!" I point to a parked Bangladesh Biman DC-10-30 at the tarmac.

"You must be serious - waking me up to show me this? When we fly back to Detroit, I'll wake you up at the sight of every Continental, Northwest, Southwest, American, US Airways, Delta and TWA aircraft on the tarmac with a scream: 'Look! Those are all from the US!'" Tim Hughes (not related to the aviation pioneer) didn't tell me that, but his expression did.

Well, you can tell it was quite a while back - the mention of the now non-existent Northwest, TWA and the DC-10-30 and hence, a much younger Naveed Mahbub. But the excitement would be no less if I see a Biman Boeing 777 parked at Heathrow today - "That's my homie, man!"

It is with the same excitement that I blab to the attractive young lady (deliberately chosen) to take

my photo at the lobby of the Sears Tower in Chicago, the tallest structure (then) in the world. Again, this is a long time ago, as this building is still the tallest, it's my first visit there and there's no concept of selfies, thus giving me the excuse to

strike up a conversation with this young lady to take my photo. And the photo is in front of the bust of Dr. F. R. Khan as my own bust is exploding with pride with the writings behind me, "...the greatest structural engineers of our times."



Junaid Ahmad, World Bank's Country Director for India.

"You see, he [Dr. Khan] and I went to the same university in Bangladesh..." I tell her.

"Whatever! Here's your camera..." is the expression on her face as she takes the single photo - not the modern day ten as each photo 'costs' to print.

But again, it is the pride of a young man to see his fellow compatriot being displayed in this iconic building. It is this same pride with which we say "(s)he is 'one of us'" when we refer to Salman Khan of Khan Academy, Jawed Karim of YouTube, Nadiya Hussain of the Great British Bakeoff, Rushanara Ali MP of Britain...though they are bred in and pledge allegiance to (logically so) to a foreign land. It is the same pride with which we tussle with our neighbours as to who Tagore and Nazrul belongs. It is this same pride with which Austria boasts its homie being the (former) Governor of 'Kaaaalifornia'. It is the same pride with which India boasts its children as being the CEOs of Microsoft, Google, PepsiCo and the governor of Louisiana.

And now it is that same pride about another homie, this time one who is born and raised in Bangladesh, educated at St. Joseph's High School in Mohammadpur and then overseas through Brown, Harvard and finally Stanford and then rising through the ranks of the World Bank to being the Chief of Staff of the President and then on to becoming the Country Chief of the World Bank in India, the bank's largest client with a net commitment of USD 27 billion.

It is not a question of 'finally, one of ours there', but a matter of being the right homie of the soil to be recognised to head the most important station of the bank.

Go homie! Behind this successful man, there is obviously a woman, his wife, who is the sister of an engineer turned comedian by the name of Naveed Mahbub. Aha! Now it all makes sense...

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

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**QUOTABLE Quote**

**CHINESE PROVERB**

*The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second best time is now.*

**CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH**

**ACROSS**

- Soap residue
- Office notes
- Chump
- Skilled
- Not obtuse
- Cruise ship
- Flapper wrapper
- Soup cracker
- Pink shade
- Clumsy galoot
- Give the boot
- Tipsy
- Show boredom
- Cut, as hay
- Take ten
- Wheel part
- "Hamilton" event
- Tennis feat
- Like tears
- Greets, in a way
- Lamb's dad
- Long look
- Green shade
- T-shirt choice
- Frisco player
- Finished

**46 Tyne of TV**

**DOWN**

- Thick cuts
- Winter quaff
- Customary
- Ran into
- Shopping haven
- Fix copy
- Flunkies
- Mine, of a sort
- Parade site
- Echo
- Ques. follower
- Cut, as hay
- Spy's crime
- Belize setting
- Heloise's love
- Wing
- Nuisance
- Exploit
- "Three Sisters" sister
- Orange feature
- Abrasive powder
- Goat
- Prepared to drive
- Pot part

**BEETLE BAILEY** by Mort Walker

**BABY BLUES** by Kirkman & Scott

**YESTERDAY'S ANSWER**

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