

Special relations - A moving feast!

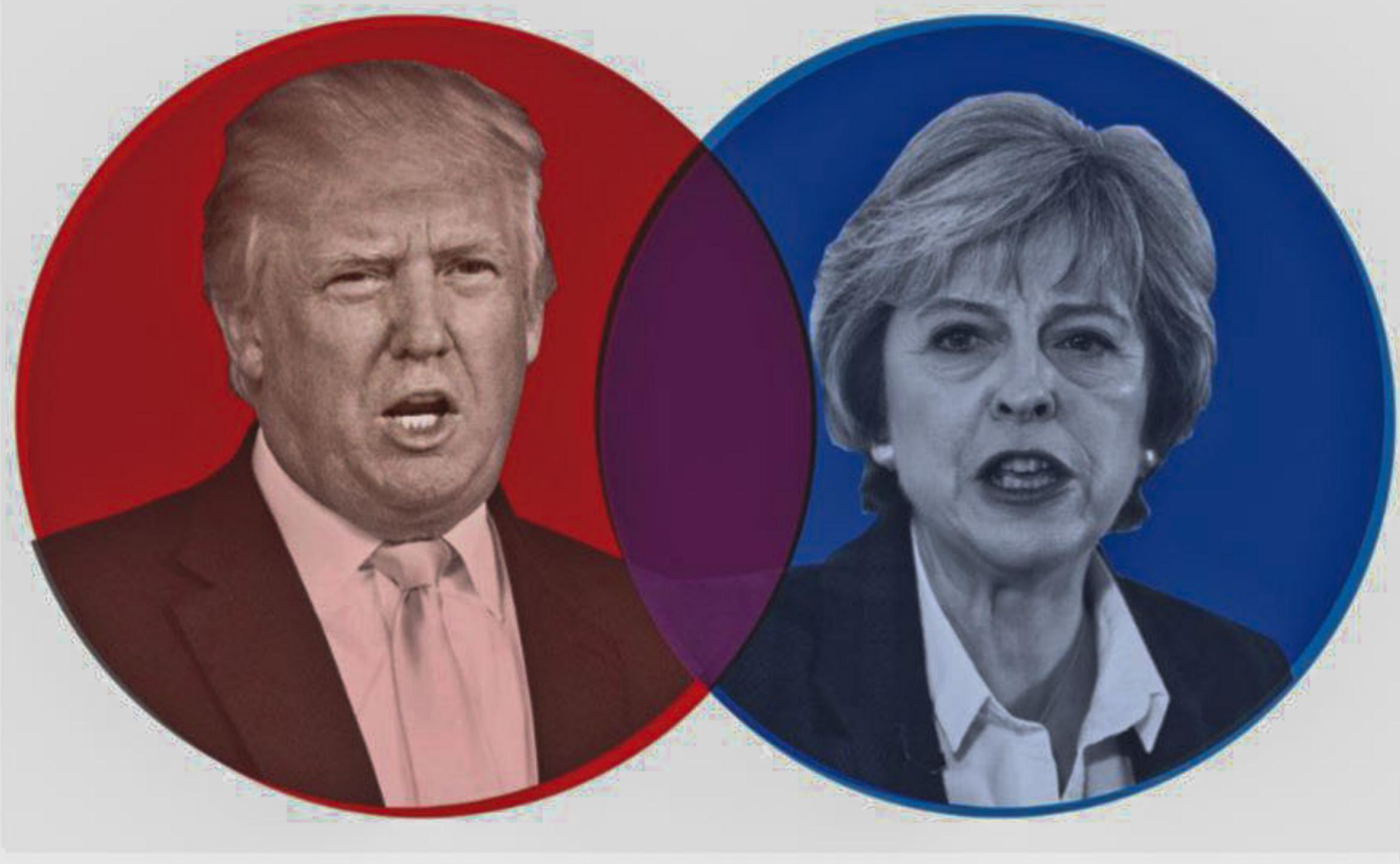
PLEASURE IS ALL MINE
BRITAIN'S special relations with the US may have come under stress; exactly the opposite of what British Prime Minister Theresa May had intended by embarking on a visit to the US last month.

A lot of dust has since been kicked up in Britain over Donald Trump's prospective State visit to the UK. The row was triggered by none other than John Bercow, the Speaker of the House of Commons, with any state visit addressing the Parliament "is not an automatic right; it is an earned honour", asserted the speaker without any ambiguity.

As a matter of fact, 1.8 million Britons have petitioned against Donald Trump's state visit to date; that would have been sufficient basis for a debate in the national Parliament on the issue. For, according to rules, the House is obliged to recognise and act on a petition by just a hundred thousand signatories.

In this context, the talk of the US president making a grandstanding joint speech to members of the House of Lords and the House of Commons is facing stiff resistance from detractors. They are making no secret of their agenda of downgrading the visit.

But the government is going ahead to accord the honour of a State visit to the US president in



line with her Majesty's wishes. It is worth mentioning that state procedure had been followed as the Queen requested the Prime Minister to hand over an invitation to the US president for a state visit to the UK. And he accepted it.

Speaker Mr. Bercow's action riled some members of Parliament so much that they started a proceeding for his removal. This has failed miserably, garnering support of only five MPs to the motion.

Whatever may be the outcome of Trump's visit, if and when it takes place, the nostalgia of cousin-like relations between the US and UK at the defining moments of their

history will keep appealing to them. After the devastating effect of the Second World War on Britain, the US lent huge sums of money to the British government for its reconstruction programmes. The British repaid the last installment of the loan only around the middle of 2000. Such has been the close US-UK ties.

There is another example of exceptional rapport between the two countries. The mutually endearing relations between Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan were put to good use when Mrs. Thatcher famously persuaded Reagan to cast off his initial

diffidence towards Mikhail Gorbachev. That way, many tend to think, the deck was cleared for Gorbachev's Perestroika and Glasnost to take hold on the Western mind. The far-reaching consequences are too known to bear any repetition.

A new version of special relations is in the offing. Shinzo Abe, the Japanese Prime Minister on his recent visit to the United States, put on the table his offer of a deal and what he expected from the US president in return. Abe would invest USD 450 billion in US infrastructure projects geared to create 700 thousand jobs in the US.

Another USD 150 billion from the Japanese government pension investment fund might be available for a large swathe of job creation, the US president's favourite priority theme.

And, what is the once-pacific Japan looking for? It is quite a shopping list - the US to boost Tokyo's Missile Defense Protection system! All the more because of the North Korean ballistic missile tests. Tokyo also wants closer links to the US' early warning radar and satellite networks.

Actually Japan has long dreamt of acquiring a better offensive strike capability to deter both China and North Korea.

In all, Japan is ready to open its largesse for a security deal. It is also being so demanding because the US has killed off the TPP.

On Trump's list is a free trade agreement aimed at opening long-restricted sectors of Japan.

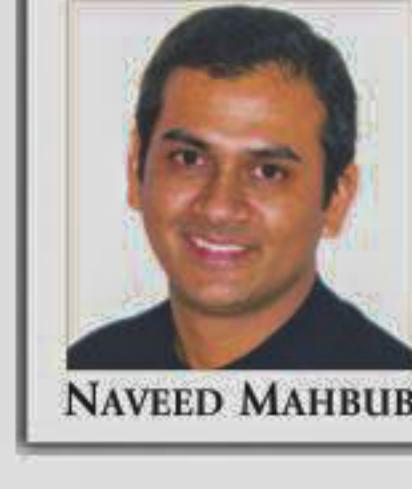
This is turning out to be an era of quests for special relations primarily on bilateral levels. You get to hear of Putin-Trump's mutual admiration topped up by far reaching far-right coalitions in quite a few European countries.

The process has been propelled by a beginning of disintegration in the EU set afoot by Brexit, rise of the far-right and break-up of multilateral trade and cooperation pacts. Where it will stabilise no one knows and that's where the danger lies.

The writer is a columnist of *The Daily Star*.

GUilty until proven innocent

HUMOROUSLY YOURS



TOUGH I insist on his giving me the full address and directions to his home, he says with confidence, "Come to the Bakshi Bazaar intersection and then just mention my name to anyone and he will direct you to my place."

I show up there and sure enough, NOBODY has ever heard of him. After a while, people start giving me strange looks.

And I do get into an argument with him at another time. He assumes the Don Corleone (Marlon Brando) voice and says ominously, "Naveed, I don't think you know who you are dealing with. Just go to that [exclusive, private] club and ask around about me and you will realise who I am."

Scared, I do exactly that. And just as he said, I DO get the same consistent answer from all five people whom I ask about him — "We have NEVER heard of this guy."

Over confidence. This is why others know more about me than I do about myself. I never knew about my non-existent mole on my back till I learned about it on social media.

I think there is also a touch of megalomania with the over confidence. That's how we are. That's fine, we love ourselves, perhaps a tad too much.

It is the overconfidence and megalomania that prompted Donald Trump to declare his travel ban which was immediately shot down by the three judges. Considering three losses in cricket being called a white wash, the actions of the three wise men and woman constitute an orange wash.

We hope that the lone man on the bank's throne, Jim Yong Kim, will hopefully pick up the phone and ask his crew the question: "What went wrong?"

Perhaps it is the same over confidence in flimsy facts and the megalomania of a few hoping to score some brownie points that lead to the World Bank's missing its disbursement target for the Padma Bridge. So it gets known as a few whistles are blown with some 'facts' sewn and the fingers are shown at the Eastern Time Zone (in Canada). The World Bank loan gets totally blown with a harsh tone as we groan and moan while being thrown into the Padma crossing at the speed of a drone as a nation is made to sit in the corner with the head adorning a cone. But we start building with dough that's our own while the bridge is no clone of the real thing.

Hope the DC based bank will not continue to be prone to pick a bone. We further hope that the lone man on the bank's throne, Jim Yong Kim, will hopefully pick up the phone and ask his crew the question: "What went wrong?"

The buck stops with you Mr Kim. No more blame storming, do some brain storming on what went wrong. The price has been too high for us being guilty until proven innocent.

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

How to create a happy and loyal workforce

THE business sector is facing serious challenges in retaining its workforce in the 21st century. The cost of high

workforce

turnover can put a company under water. To add to the cost of hiring appropriate talent and training, there is the cost of time lost if talent cannot be retained, thus substantiating the cost of loss in reputation. When buying talent in the job market today, we have to remember that it is a seller's market too.

Thus, retaining talent today is almost a kind of business science. In order to retain talent, the company needs to design an appropriate work environment, with a philosophy of respect for the individual, and the right remuneration and perks along with the guarantee of prospects of an exciting work environment to grow. To build such companies we need to invest in building such skills for matching with working roles, and then ensure the level of employee engagement in today's dynamic marketplace with proper work and life balance. These small but significant factors can be a deciding factor in a talented employee staying with the company or leaving it.

Some employers forget these HR aspects or perhaps don't even know the difference and still consider themselves as good employers. If a company cannot retain its productive employees they will lose out. We cannot blame employees, and the blame-game never helps the cause. If a company wants to retain its talents, they

must demonstrate the right attitude, approach, tools, expertise and will to invest in human capital.

In the seventies, they had a personnel department - a colonial concept. Later on in the eighties, the term 'human resources' came into style, but unfortunately, the attitude and approach remained the same as in the past. Therefore, employees are still not actually

look around and consider the high tech, high touch feel of today's job market and also anticipate, appreciate, and evaluate aspirations of individuals, and support them to translate their ideas into reality. In this case each CEO has a pivotal role to play as a leader. The CEO is the social architect of the company, and this has to be reflected in his/her actions and activities.

In truth most people become managers accidentally, as a result of their sudden success/promotion, or other factors. Next, they find themselves responsible for hiring people. Once they have hired someone, many managers are unclear or unaware of exactly what to do, because of the lack of knowledge and experience. This often leads to disasters for both the company and the employee. They

new generation is well aware of these conventional views and more knowledgeable about various management aspects of a company.

The good news is that the employers of the 21st century have already made a major paradigm shift and a company's success depends on the ability to attract and retain talent. Because all material resources can be managed but real productivity brought by high quality people is rather difficult to manage. Therefore we have to enforce practices to raise people's self-esteem and make them feel valuable. For this, the four A's are essential: appreciation, approval, admiration and attention.

Internal branding helps improve employee retention and productivity through programmes that build job satisfaction and motivation, while reinforcing brand messages traditionally targeted mostly at external audiences. Companies incorporate brand messages across all internal activities - training, orientation, team building, and more, through a mix of branding, organisational development and employee communications strategies. Failing to link brand strategy with employee communications is a serious mistake.

Building long-lasting relationships play a vital role in an employee staying with a company. Some have said that when they decided to leave the company, they would have stayed if they were asked, but they never were. Building long-term relationships means creating brand equity and loyalty.

The writer is an author, and business marketing and brand catalyst. He is the recipient of global brand leadership award in 2007. E-mail: aftab.go.brand@gmail.com



being treated as 'resources' in many companies. The only change has been in the name of the position responsible for personnel management, which we now know as HR Manager. A mere change in naming is never going to make a difference. Knowledge, planning, policies, and investment are also required.

Hence, organisations need to

initiate 'people first' approaches. Use truth as a platform for possibility, not a barrier to growth. The ineffective CEO cannot win the heart of employees and cannot enhance the corporate image at all. The CEO as the leader of an organisation may have his/her own style of leadership. But simply saying that "my door is open" is not going to make the magic happen.

cannot gauge the capability of the employee, so they try to manage him/her in an arbitrary manner. It confuses and demoralises the employees at the receiving end. People start indulging in office-politics, nepotism and sycophancy. Consequently, a lot of talent leaves the company because of a lack of satisfaction.

The old days are gone and the

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Tears
- 5 Billionaire Hughes
- 11 Not busy
- 12 Slow tempo
- 13 Singer Seeger
- 14 Fail to follow suit
- 15 Com unit
- 16 Sunset spot
- 17 Washington successor
- 19 Boxing poke
- 22 Relish
- 24 Sock site
- 26 Roasting spot
- 27 Lake near Buffalo
- 28 Historic event
- 30 Easy runs
- 31 Spots on TV
- 32 Quiver item
- 34 Stratagem
- 35 Lumber unit
- 36 Strident sounds
- 41 Go by bus
- 42 Made over
- 43 Privy to
- 44 Takes on
- 45 Storybook monster

DOWN

- 1 Fully developed
- 2 Notion
- 3 Mary Poppins' creator
- 4 Lookupon
- 5 Seraglio
- 6 Black Sea port
- 7 Desire
- 8 Candle count
- 9 Equip
- 10 Buck's mate
- 16 Simple card game
- 18 Dresses in
- 19 Harry Potter's creator
- 20 Stepped down
- 21 Honeybunch
- 22 Family room fixture
- 23 Gun-ho
- 25 Infamous emperor
- 29 Natural gift
- 30 Attempt
- 33 Valentine gift
- 34 Stage item
- 36 Freshener target
- 37 Heredity unit
- 38 Lingerie item
- 39 Went first
- 40 Flurry
- 41 Carnival city

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

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

BEETLE BAILEY



by Mort Walker

BABY BLUES



by Kirkman & Scott

QUOTABLE Quote



JHUMPA LAHIRI

AMERICAN AUTHOR

Language, identity, place, home: these are all of a piece - just different elements of belonging and not-belonging.



SHAH HUSAIN IMAM

COLUMNIST

Language, identity, place, home: these are all of a piece - just different elements of belonging and not-belonging.