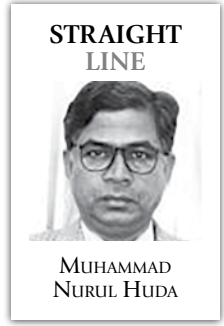


Remembering Professor Syed Saleheen Qadri

A public-spirited educator



STRAIGHT LINE
 In the throes of struggling with the Covid-19 scourge, Bangladesh has unfortunately lost many of her illustrious sons in the not-too-distant past. To the utter dismay of many, there has been one more addition to this list. This writer, with a heavy heart, is recollecting his privileged association with Professor Syed Saleheen Qadri PhD, a distinguished teacher, whom the cold hands of death snatched from our midst on the morning of September 1.

It was in the Rotary fraternity way back in 1994 where I had the benefit of knowing and interacting frequently with this soft-spoken personality. Suavity of manners coupled with amiable disposition were the hallmarks of his character and one could not resist being friendly and drawn to him. Whenever he deliberated on the norms and nuances of Rotary of which he was markedly proud, all Rotarians listened in rapt attention. He would readily volunteer to offer valuable and considered suggestions when needed and would go the extra length to read papers and documents thoroughly, encouraging young Rotarians to get acclimatised to Rotary culture. In fact, his companionship very aptly brought into focus the wisdom of the famous saying that, "God has given us the relations but we can always choose our friends and acquaintances we wish to cultivate and cherish for a healthy and fuller life".

His passing assumes profound significance for me and many of his admirers and colleagues because he left us at a time when single-minded pursuit of money has impoverished the mind, shrivelled the imagination and desiccated the heart of many.

Dr Qadri served as Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Dhaka University and lately at Independent University, Bangladesh. His intellectual curiosity and capacity to think clearly made him a true teacher worth emulating. He believed that what we need today more than anything else is moral leadership—founded on courage, intellectual integrity and a sense of values. Such a belief acquires meaning when real life experience shows that intellectual integrity is a much rarer quality than financial integrity. He was quietly resolute in support of his view of life and had the courage to stand up for that.

Dr Qadri had high aims in life and thus it was only natural that he wandered beyond the safe provision of personal gratifications. His empathetic persona and admirable public-spiritedness endeared him to many. It was thus no surprise that he was a distinguished Rotarian for more than four decades and held various leadership positions to his credit. He sought the cooperation of all perceptive persons in the active work of voluntary service. Blessed with the gift of the gab and being meticulous to the pinpoint and having a mastery over the rules and regulations of the Rotary world, Dr Qadri quite often enlivened the proceedings of many events.

Dr Qadri was, in a real sense, a total Rotarian in that he personified the Rotary ideals and principles in his personal and professional dealings. This is no exaggeration as readers perhaps know that the Rotary invocation is the following: "We the Rotarians are dedicated to the ideal of service to maintain a high ethical standard in our business and profession and to dignify our vocation by enhancing international understanding, goodwill and peace through people united in the ideal of service". His truthfulness, fairness, harbouring of goodwill and better friendships and above all, concern for the welfare of others, made him a real gentleman.

In carrying out the noble objectives of Rotary, Dr Qadri was an effective and trusted partner of society, providing voluntary services of the highest ethical standards with leadership for the purpose of social development. He earnestly envisioned a scenario where Bangladeshis will unite and take action to create lasting change across the globe in our communities and in ourselves.

His passion for education, particularly science education, was manifest in his founding of the Institute for Developing Science and Health Initiatives (ideSHI), of which he was the scientific coordinator. The mission of ideSHI is as follows: "create awareness, strengthen capacity and power innovations to make Bangladesh a global leader in the field of biomedical sciences and translational research". The vision of the organisation is "to improve lives and help attain better health for Bangladeshis".

Dr Qadri contracted Covid last July but recovered. Unfortunately, he was readmitted with pneumonia. He tested Covid negative but his lungs were in poor condition and he was put on a ventilator. He passed away while on breathing support.

Professor Saleheen Qadri leaves behind Dr Firdausi Qadri, Senior Scientist at icddr, and recipient of several international honours, including the recent Magsaysay Award, and two erudite sons and a daughter. May his soul rest in eternal peace and may the Almighty grant courage and fortitude to his family to bear the loss.

Muhammad Nurul Huda is a former IGP of Bangladesh.



Dr Syed Saleheen Qadri. PHOTO: COLLECTED

PROJECT SYNDICATE

The Olympic-size difference between India and China



SHASHI THAROOR

THE Tokyo Olympic Games are over, and the Japanese people and government have heaved a sigh of relief that the spectacle passed without a major Covid-19 outbreak in the athletes' village or other disasters. Here in India, the celebrations of the country's first gold medal in the men's javelin throw—and its best-ever medal performance at a single Olympics—have not yet subsided. But how good, really, is our best?

In the run-up to the 2008 Beijing Games, China embarked on "Project 119," a government programme devised specifically to boost the country's Olympic medal haul (the 119 refers to the number of golds awarded at the 2000 Sydney Games in such medal-laden sports as track and field, swimming, rowing, sailing, and canoeing and kayaking). Indians, by contrast, wonder if they will ever crack the magic ceiling of 10 medals.

China, seeing the number of medals on offer in kayaking, decided to create a team that would master a sport hitherto unknown in the Middle Kingdom. But India has not even lobbied successfully for the inclusion in the Games of the few sports it does play well, such as kabaddi (a form of tag-team wrestling), polo, or cricket, which was played in the 1900 Olympics and never since.

Likewise, China has developed new strengths in other non-traditional

sports, like shooting, while maintaining its dominance in table tennis and badminton. India, by contrast, has seen its once-legendary invincibility in field hockey fade with the introduction of artificial turf, to the point where a bronze for the men's team in Tokyo prompted great exhilaration. When it comes to sport, forget "Chindia"—the two countries barely belong in the same sentence.

What has happened at the Olympics resources devoted to it, state-of-the-art technology acquired, and world-class coaches imported. India, by contrast, approached the Tokyo Olympics as it had every other, with its usual combination of amiable amateurism, bureaucratic ineptitude, half-hearted experimentation, and shambolic organisation.

That's simply the way we are. If the Chinese authorities want to build a new six-lane expressway, they can bulldoze

for the Tokyo Games alone probably exceeded India's expenditure on all Olympic training in the last 70 years. So, whereas India produces individual excellence despite the system's limitations, individual success in China is a product of the system. Indians excel wherever individual talent is given free rein. The country has produced world-class computer scientists, mathematicians, biotech researchers, filmmakers, and novelists. But come up with a challenge that requires high levels of organisation, strict discipline, sophisticated equipment, systematic training, and elastic budgets, and Indians quail. Perhaps tellingly, the only Indians who have attained the title of world champion in recent years have been a billiards player and a chess grandmaster.

In Tokyo, the much-favoured Indian shooters failed to win a single medal, owing to setbacks such as a malfunctioning trigger on a world champion's pistol that could not be fixed quickly enough. The best women's table tennis player, denied the advice of her trainer, snubbed the official Indian coach, leading to disciplinary action. Our female archer, ranked first in the world, failed to get past her qualifying round.

India's sporting talent pool is smaller than its large population suggests; in a country of existential challenges and intense competition for every opportunity, very few feel able or inclined to devote the time needed to master a sport. The system is not designed to unearth athletic talent, and many who have it lack the health, nutrition, sporting infrastructure, and training resources required to make a global mark.

India, unlike China, is a fractious democracy. China will win many Olympic medals for many Games to come. But India, perhaps, might win some hearts.

Shashi Tharoor, a former UN under-secretary-general and former Indian Minister of State for External Affairs and Minister of State for Human Resource Development, is an MP for the Indian National Congress.
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Athletes gather next to the Olympic Cauldron during the closing ceremony of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. PHOTO: AFP

What has happened at the Olympics speaks to a basic difference in the two countries' systems. Put metaphorically, it's the creative chaos of all-singing, all-dancing Bollywood versus the perfectly choreographed precision of the 2008 Beijing opening ceremony.

QUOTABLE Quote

MIRA NAIR
 Indian-American filmmaker (October 15, 1957)

Never treat anything you do as a stepping stone. Do it fully, and follow it completely.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Frugal fellow
- 6 Scout settlements
- 11 Aunt's spouse
- 12 Dote on
- 13 Kitchen appliance
- 15 Finish
- 16 Tea cooler
- 17 Mendes of movies
- 18 Ruin
- 20 Ready to go
- 21 Rooster's mate
- 22 Three squared
- 23 Seedy bars
- 26 Searches
- 27 Pennsylvania port
- 28 Bowler or boater
- 29 Sock part
- 30 Armed

DOWN

- 1 Understated
- 2 Self-contained
- 3 A lot
- 4 High trains
- 5 Stops working
- 6 Music's Mariah
- 7 Commotion
- 8 Takes up

residence

- 9 Stop
- 10 Lawmaking groups
- 14 Bus. sch. course
- 19 Quaker's pronoun
- 22 Squirrel's cache
- 23 Spots
- 24 Smelter's need
- 25 Tries to get
- 26 Letter guessing game
- 28 Enormous
- 30 Honking birds
- 31 Walks in the woods
- 32 Singer Cara
- 33 Divides
- 38 Pear-shaped fruit
- 39 Previously

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

S	P	L	A	T	A	C	E	D											
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BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER

HERE'S SOME COFFEE... THANK YOU... AND YOUR LOTTERY NUMBER... FOR WHAT?... FIVE PEOPLE, ONE BATHROOM, REMEMBER?... CAN WE PLEASE START THE DRAWING?

BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ZERO, CAN YOU REFILL MY MECHANICAL PENCIL? SURE, SARGE... LEADED, PLEASE