

CHINITO SINCE 1995

In search of an apt pasture to graze

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NIZAMUDDIN AHMED

There is a reason why you do not see me singing on television. Neither can I make your long journeys pleasurable because you will not find me on the car radio. It is because there are many other avenues to offer tranquillity to viewers and safety to drivers. The irony is I can sing and, to be honest, I do a better job than many in the limelight; those who face the camera in a dishevelled (artistic?) state or in designer costume. There has not been any measure of requests from any quarter. But there is something called self-assessment, which keeps me away.

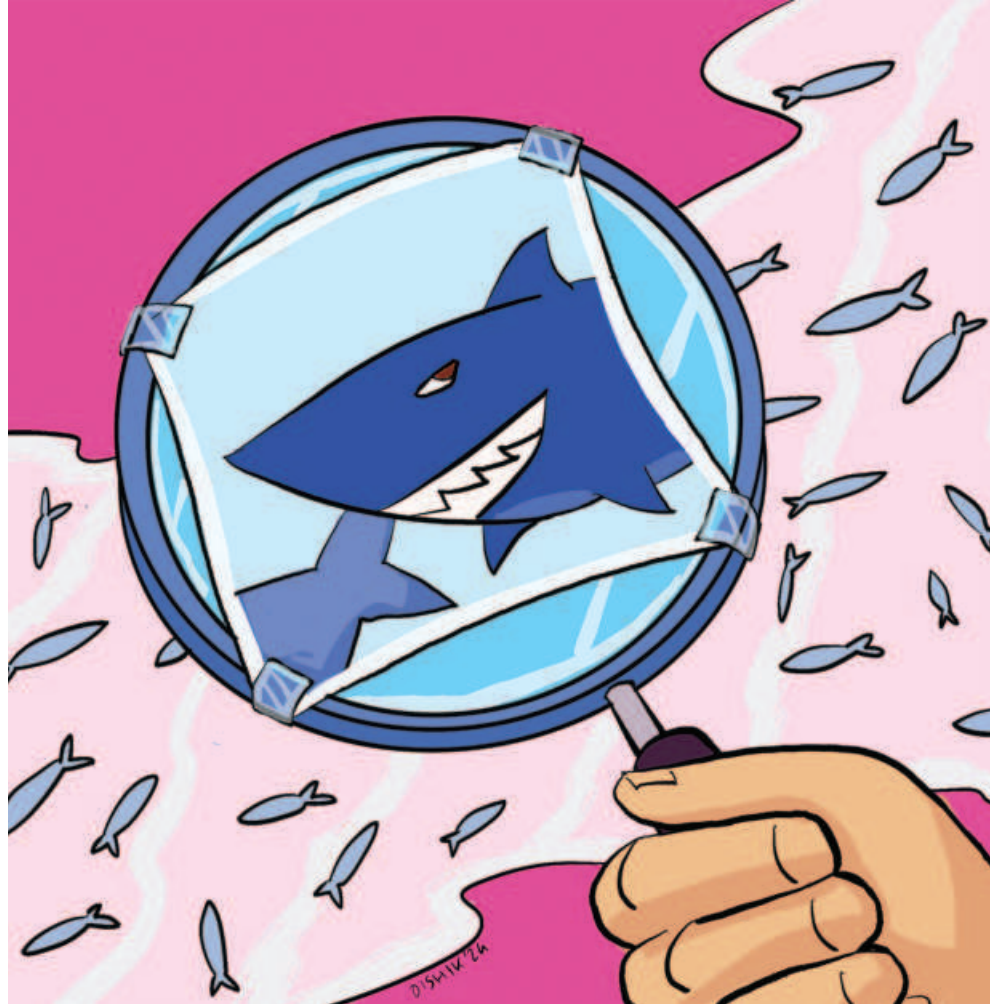
Extending the above discussion on exposure, by plain reasoning, I have not yielded to an urge to perform a sitar recital. This after having owned a stringed instrument for 15 years and endured by four patient ustads. None of them told me I was bad. Silence sayeth a thousand words. Occasionally, avoiding eye contact, lips pursed, they cradle my sitar, and paradise pours out, not to prove that they can play, but to lure back the birds that were driven away by my laborious sa-ma-re-ga. You realise instantly you have miles to go, or perhaps you can hear the whistle blow.

My other disqualification is that I usually avoid talk shows because I know I hardly know anything versus the other guests knowing everything. Their TV studio is the only lounge on earth where the host encourages guests to pit and spar against each other with a smile. Under lights and on camera, guests are offered a mug of sponsored tea or coffee. Check before you take a sip; it could be from the night before. Mind-bogglingly, some debaters do not blink either eye while gliding seamlessly from Barapukuria to Westminster, from fire safety to bungee jumping, from Begumpara to Nakhal, from mass shooting to catching *maas* in the Arctic. One indication of being educated is to know when to say "No".

In the just-concluded 12th parliamentary elections, candidates misperceived the much-touted "*utshobmukhor poribesh*" as a festival. They decided to join the assumed gaiety, without realising that being a member of parliament was different from a social club membership.

The inevitable happened. Our voters came out tops. They were not deceived by glamour or glitter, empty promises, and heroics by non-heroes. The latter is the creation of the irresponsible media. You do not promote anything that walks on two legs.

Some candidates were sitting ducks. They got around 200 votes where the winning candidate secured nearly a lakh. Hundreds of wishful hopefuls, who could not comprehend their worth in society, lost their security deposits. As a slap for stupidity, fanned by



the media, they secured less than 12.5 percent of the total votes cast in their respective constituency.

You could question why not 10 or 15 percent. Twelve point five is the decimal of "one-eighth", which fraction emerged after hours of deliberation over days among dozens, labelled as a think tank. Also, do not ponder whether anyone has ever seen a tank think.

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In several districts, 75 to 80 percent of the candidates lost their deposits; call it *ijjat*. Countrywide, this year over 50 percent lost their chicken feed. That also has been the trend of previous elections when pitiable losers numbered from 1,000 to 1,500. Which precisely means we forget the lessons and gear up every five years because we cannot say, "No".

Call it a disease even if you are not a doctor.

How difficult is it for a person to assess he will get only a few hundred votes? The fakes in the crowd early in his campaign should be an eyeopener. If he can't realise he will lose, how will he ever win?

Such waste of time and squandering of money can be overcome by "election consultants", who live in every living room, working for free. Let them find the facts, snooping around households, asking veiled queries to friends, family, and foes. After a prolonged study let them inform the ambitious "client" that he can start meeting people in preparation for the next elections, or politely bow out. One suggestion though: the person likely to amass less than a thousand votes should be emailed. A face-to-face tete-a-tete could lead to the consultant being punched on the face. These vainglorious people are disturbed narcissists.

On the bright side, there usually is a next time. Brighter still, there always are other pastures to graze on.

READERS' CORNER

'Country first, company second, culture somewhere'

SHAFIQ R BHUIYAN

Rabindranath, not the Bard of Bengal, began an internship at a renowned local company in quest of the actual essence of corporate culture. He studied BBA to keep up with the trends, but now he regrets doing so.

Rabindranath believed getting a job would teach him how to administer businesses properly. Unfortunately, after beginning his internship, Rabindranath only realised how to be more resilient. He thought to himself that he would have been better off if he had studied Disaster Management to learn about resilience.

He majored in Organisational Behaviour (OB). He was more interested in learning about company culture and writing an internship report on it during his internship.

When Rabindranath asked about the company's culture for the eighth time during a session, Foshol Khan, his organisation's head of HR, became furious. "I can hear; I am not deaf," Foshol Khan responded, inspired by the latest Bollywood hit "AniMale".

"Sorry, Papa," Rabindranath said unwittingly, picturing himself as the AniMale protagonist.

Foshol Khan was taken aback. He toned down, adding, "Son, country comes first and above anything else. The company comes afterwards. There is nothing special about company culture. It's there, but I'm not sure where."

Rabindranath seemed perplexed. According to Foshol Khan, "Our national legacy is the 'Yes Boss' culture -- and that is the only thing we should care about."

"But sir..." Rabindranath was unable to complete the statement.

"There is no 'but', 'if', 'whether', or 'or' in corporate culture; erase these words from your dictionary. Remember that the boss is always right." "But you're not my boss,"

Rabindranath pointed out. "I am your boss's boss. I am super right."

Foshol Khan had just finished speaking when his phone rang. When he answered the phone, all Rabindranath could hear was:

"Sir, Sir"; "Yes Sir"; "Yes Sir" ... "Yes Sir"; "Sir, Sir"; "Yes Sir."

Instead of writing a report following the three-month intense internship searching for examples of great corporate culture, Rabindranath authored his a best-seller titled "Country First, Company Second, Culture Somewhere".



Email your satire pieces to starsatireday@gmail.com

Citizens to store natural emissions to beat rising gas prices

AFIZAN HAIDER

Things have been pretty bleak in Fapa city. With the Russia-Ukraine war tumbling down on the world's economy, gas prices have increased by 88 percent in the country just within a year. The price of gas cylinders have doubled and citizens have been left to worry about the dent in their pockets just to cook food.

Recently however, the minister of gaseous affairs provided an innovative solution to the problem. In a special press release from the ministry, he announced that citizens would benefit from stocking up on radishes in order to produce methane at home.

"We understand that this is a difficult situation for the citizens of our country but modern problems require modern solutions. The ministry advises that citizens immediately include radishes in their diet, and store the naturally produced flatulence of the human body," read the press release.

"Many may not be aware that intestinal gas contains many gases like nitrogen, oxygen, hydrogen, carbon dioxide and methane. We have formulated a device to extract the methane from these gases and utilise it as fuel for the home. However, this is not an individual endeavour.

"For this solution to have real life impact, we need every citizen to participate in this biological project without shame, stigma or fear. Only that way can we achieve maximum impact. Release yourself for a



PHOTO: JASON LEUNG

better tomorrow," read the press release.

After the announcement of sales of the Gasinator to process the released gas, the consumers' need for LPG gas cylinders had decreased.

Shahana Begum, a homemaker from Tejkunipara, said, "We were so worried with increasing prices of essentials and gas that we couldn't make ends meet. But the Gasinator has changed our lives. It costs less than LPG gas and we produce it ourselves. We take pride in participating in this process."

On the other hand, this innovative solution has led to a staggering increase in the price of radishes.

Mokkul Mia, a radish-seller from Kawran Bazar, said, "I have never seen better times. So many people from my village thought I was stupid to shift to radish farming from paddy but look who's laughing now."

"I'm proud that my radishes have impacted so many people trying to survive this economic crunch. But if the government could subsidise the Gasinators for the rural folk, we would be able to pass wind not just for ourselves, but also for our community as a whole," he added.

Zannatul Iftiar, a student of Agricultural University of Fapa said, "I think this is a great initiative. But still a lot of people fear the stigma of stench and don't want to participate. But we must overcome this. After all, the fate of our future lies in our collective blow-off."

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