



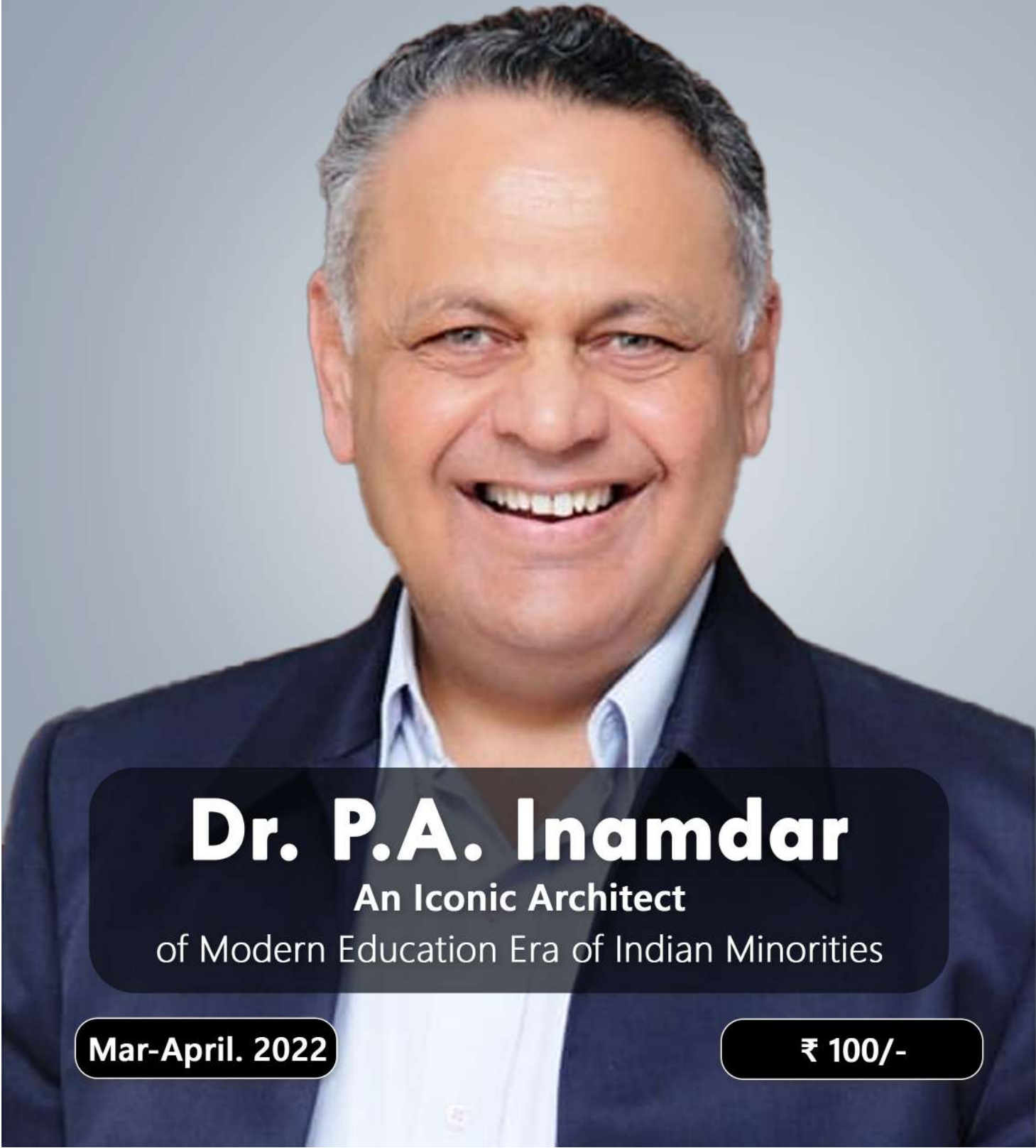
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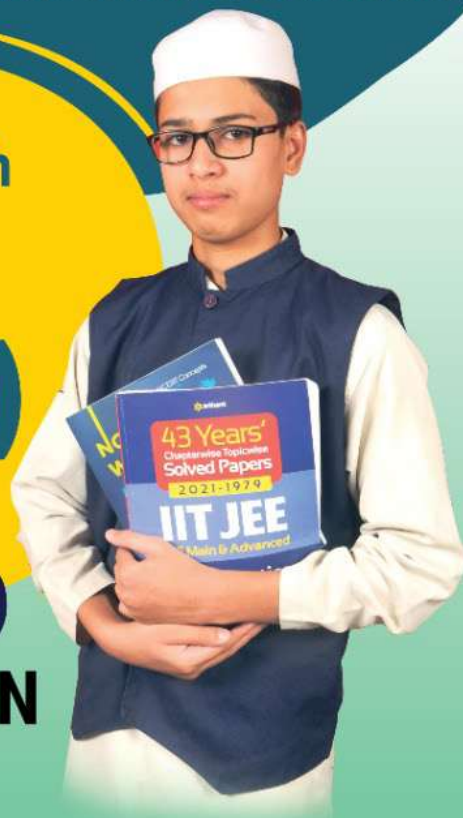
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# Kolkata: Exhibition features diversity in products by women entrepreneurs

By Shaheryar Hossain, Kolkata



Kolkata: Womanista, an exhibition cum sale based on women clothing, was held in Heera Banquet on March 20, 2022.

The products at the stalls ranged from condiments, trinkets, dry fruits and artificial jewellery to clothing. The event was aimed at promoting micro-entrepreneurship among women.

“We are selling products [clothes stitched by women] in our stall. Our main aim is to create employment opportunities for non working women [house wives, single mother, divorced]. So that they can earn their livelihood,” said Shazia Rahman, executive member of All Bengal Muslim Women’s Association [ABMWA].

She reiterated that main objective

of the ABMWA is to inculcate entrepreneurship skills among non working women.

“In our stall there are salwar suits, scarfs, burqa and other outfits made by women. We have set up our stall here to display several things. The price, too, is very reasonable and affordable to all buyers, especially the poor women,” said another executive member of ABMWA.

Interestingly, Faraan Danish [8-year-old] – a young and budding entrepreneur from Mumbai, had also put up stall named Faraan Foods.

“I want to become a business. I am selling dates in my stall. I have sold almost 80 percent of it,” said Faraan, who wants to prove that there is no age barrier for invention and

entrepreneurship. His humble approach reflects his meteoric rise to business and popularity.

“My father [Danish Reyaz] is my inspiration. He always supports me and inspires me to achieve my goal,” pointed out Mumbai boy.

It might be mentioned that Islamic quiz was also held at the exhibition. The winners were also felicitated.

Maaeshat Business Club [MBC], consists of entrepreneurs from different categories and sectors who have come together to exchange business and to grow together, had also set up its stall at Womanista.

“Through our stall we want promote business among women. There are a lot of elements to the system, including one tenet called “Right Person, Right Seat.” The idea is that a member of a team should share core values with the company, feel a sense of ownership over his or her position and be equipped to fulfill what the role demands,” said Danish Reyaz, founder of MCB.

According to bain.com, Today India has 13.5–15.7 million women-owned enterprises, representing 20% of all enterprises. While large in absolute numbers, these are overwhelmingly comprised of single person enterprises, which provide direct employment for an estimated 22 to 27 million people. Further, a number of enterprises reported as womenowned are not in fact controlled or run by women.



A combination of financial and administrative reasons leads to women being “on paper” owners with little role to play. Benchmarks from high performing countries and

Indian states provide a good yardstick for India to accelerate overall female entrepreneurship. Accelerating quantity and quality



of entrepreneurship towards such benchmarks can create over 30 million women-owned enterprises, of which 40% can be more than self-employment. This can generate potentially transformational employment in India, of 150–170 million jobs, which is more than 25% of the new jobs required for the entire working age population, from now until 2030.

Achieving this visionary but realistic goal requires understanding the barriers facing the various types of women entrepreneurs across the landscape in India. Specifically, we see six distinct segments of entrepreneurs, which exhibit differing characteristics based on whether they are scaled, small or solo; urban or rural; engaged in agriculture or outside. An in-depth understanding of these segments has been crucial for us to gain true insight in to motivations, advocacy, constraints, and most importantly, the solutions to accelerate entrepreneurship for women in India. For instance, while access to finance impacts nearly every entrepreneur, it manifests in the form of disparity in the investor ecosystem for the scalers, but lack of information and absence of tailored products, for rural and urban solopreneurs.

Similarly, scalers face an unfair disadvantage due to exclusion from networks, especially informal ones, but for urban solopreneurs, it is about not having had the opportunity to be part of a network of any sort. Rural agripreneurs is a distinct segment, which is here to stay, and can be a critical catalyst of the modernisation of agriculture and the rural ecosystem. All segments of entrepreneurs, as well as non-entrepreneurs, face severely inhibiting cultural constraints. These manifest in the form of denial of the social permission to work and gender biases that persists widely.

# Halal India collaborated with INHART, Malaysia.

Chennai- Wanting to gain the knowledge of the science behind Halal has respectively increased in the last 3 years. Many industry professionals and graduates have showcased immense interest in understanding the concept of Halal and Haram. Halal India Pvt. Ltd. has contributed hugely on spreading the awareness and teaching the professional through their training programs.

On 11 January 2022, to further strengthen the education and training of the Halal concepts, “Halal India” joined hands with “Institute for Halal Research and Training (INHART) (by International Islamic University Malaysia, IIUM)” as a Training Collaborator.

This collaboration aims to enhance vocational training, making the professionals employable by creating

avenues for them to access better work opportunities.

Certainly, this shall bring the dynamic knowledge seeking opportunity to the Indian market whereby the students from India would be equipped with the

halal industry”. He further added, “INHART and Halal India, Halal training collaboration will bring an international recognition to the students and is recognized by industry as a desirable skill that will lead to career placement”.

Mr Jinna states that Halal India as an establishment has continuously striven to build an inclusive knowledge environment and he hoped that this collaboration will provide an opportunity to professionals

to build their career and shape their future.

He further added “we appreciate the cooperation of the INHART officials who made this collaboration a success”.

This gracious press conference held at United Holdings Inc, Puducherry on 25 Feb 2022.



academic knowledge & insight from the reputed Malaysian Government Institute, INHART.

Mr Mohamed Jinna, Chairman, Halal India says “this training collaboration brings uniquely designed and curated modules for the internal & external trainings, which will enhance the knowledge of the students in global



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# KwaZulu-Natal Trade and Investment Indaba & World Halal Day “EMERGE ENRICH EMPOWER”



The 8th World Halal Day which took place in South Africa as a collaboration between United World Halal Development (UNWHD) and Trade and Investment KwaZulu-Natal (TIKZN), Government of KwaZulu-Natal was deemed a success by both parties.

The three day event was a major step forward in developing the halal sector in Durban, SA and Africa. The conference had guest speakers

from across the world who shed light on all things halal and how the halal sector has contributed significantly to their country's economy. There were speakers from India, Turkey, Indonesia, Malaysia, Russia, Mauritius, Singapore, Tatarstan, Pakistan, Sudan and Ghana.

Conversations and panel discussions focused on investing in the halal sector, leveraging halal trade through the Africa Continental free trade area,

unpacking the halal export market and halal regulatory environment and infrastructure. There was also a huge focus placed on countries supporting each other and creating ways for each country to contribute to and support the halal sector, together.

A major part of this event was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between TIKZN and Tatarstan Investment Development Agency (TIDA), based





*R106 trillion Halal industry is set to create more than 450 000 jobs in KwaZulu-Natal*

in Russia. This MOU will further enhance the country's potential of international imports and exports between Russia and South Africa, within the halal sector. This will also give SA the support and confidence required to adopt halal trade structures already put into place in Russia.

CEO of TIKZN, Neville Matjie, expressed his excitement of the engagement between two countries under the halal banner and stated: "We are looking forward to the opportunities that this will bring into Durban and SA and we welcome the jobs that this will create." He added that South Africans now understand the halal concept better and are more optimistic in being a part of the halal industry.

The engagement between the Republic of Tatarstan and South Africa was only made possible by United World Halal Development (UNWHD). A core value of UNWHD is to unite governments to expand on their halal sectors together and create a support system for each country. UNWHD is also responsible for bringing in speakers from other countries that can share their expertise on what may work in the South Africa halal market.

Another important MOU was between TIKZN and Shafeeq Shameel & Co. India, a leather company in India. This was done because leather is a huge economy in India and has created 4.42 million jobs with approximately 2705 leather establishments in the country. At a time where the impact of Covid\_19 has negatively impacted many jobs in South Africa and across the world, the leather industry is seen as an opportunity for South Africa to tap into to create more job opportunities and contribute to the economy.

There was an exhibition that took place in conjunction with the conference. Exhibitors included fresh produce, health and beauty products, food, art, banking and clothing. These are potential businesses that could form as part of the halal sector in the KZN region. This event was an opportunity for exhibitors to have access to over 15,000 Halal industry professionals, showcase their offerings and introduce new products to the world market.

The launch of the first food bank, a UNWHD initiative, kicked off in Durban at the Soofie Darbar, in Al Pine Street. This forms part of a social responsibility project, that no one should go hungry. The food bank is said to provide food to 250

people daily. The KZN ambassador of this initiative, Madame Ela Gandhi, granddaughter of the late Mahatma Gandhi, is keen on extending this to the Phoenix Settlement and is currently working on how this can reach rural areas. The launch of the food bank is an effort to eradicate poverty.

Founding Chairman of UNWHD, Mohamed Jinna, welcomed the positive outcome of 2021 event that will bring South Africa one step closer to making their mark on the global halal scale. He was also pleased to know that this conference has unpacked the halal sector in depth and given South Africans hope that this will create more job and business opportunities for them.

This event will seek to place Durban as the economic hub for trade in the halal sector, a first in SA and Africa. KZN Premier, Sihle Zikalala said: "We need to develop Durban port as the halal hub. Together we will build and progress as a nation."

The next World Halal Day is set to take place in Tatarstan in Russia between 19-21 May 2022. Official Key handover from TIKZN to Russia - Islamic World: Kazan Summit 2022 took place in the event.

# Resolution Passed at Golmez Edupreneur Conference in Meghalaya

Education in India is state subject where government is primarily responsible for providing subsidized education to children up to secondary level. However quality of education in state managed institutions is quite poor.

To address the issue there have emerged private educational institutions but these schools are quite expensive and outside the reach of poor and middle income people.

Philanthropist have come forward to provide subsidized education but they are few and mostly involved in other businesses to support their educational ventures.

Muslim community has additional challenges as many parents want to also expose their children to religious education in early years.

Above issue create hurdles on both the fronts. Community owned educational institutions are not sustainable without external support and children develop learning disabilities due to diverged focus during early years. Consequently drop out rate is highest among Muslim children.

In this background Maeeshat Media organized a One-Day Conference at the university of science and technology Meghalay on March 10, 2022 where people involved in running educational institutions from across

India gathered to explore ways and means to address specific challenges faced by Muslim community owned educational institution

The most important objective was two fold. How to make educational ventures sustainable and yet affordable to the community and how to improve quality of education so that students are encouraged by o pursue their higher education without much hindrance and get gainful employment after completing their education.



Following are the outcomes of the deliberations made during the conference.

Round Table Entrepreneur Conference held by University of Science and Technology, Meghalaya, passes following resolutions:

1. Education system should be connected with skills, so that students do not need to waste their precious time to be stable financially after completing their education, rather they should be a skillful self independent financially

just after completing their education. As the global system is rapidly changing, it is need of time that education system should be updated, so that it is ensured that students' time is utilised positively in proper way. Technology should be made part of education and positive thoughts should be promoted.

2. Efforts should be made to make the Madrasas self reliant financially to overcome the financial challenges in present time and in future.

Islamic Madaris along with training the students, should impress the society too with their extraordinary services, so that the community should not start hating them due to seeking financial help constantly.

3. The institutions which are struggling to improve the Muslim society educationally, today's conference will campaign to help

them technically such as Shaheen Institutions, Karnataka, Al Ameen Mission, Bengal, Azam Campus, Maharashtra etc.

4. Mutual cooperation and idea exchanges between the systems of the universities must be ensured, so that students of one university can get benifit from other university's special quality.

Maeeshat wishes to establish Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship & Management (IIEM)



# মেইশেট মিডিয়া প্রাইভেট লিমিটেড বার্ষিক বঁটা প্রদান



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## THE NORTH EAST TIMES

GUWAHATI ■ FRIDAY ■ MARCH 11, 2022

### 'Maeshat Edupreneur awards conferred at USTM'

● Entrepreneurs from across India and USA brainstorm at USTM

ITHALE, Khanapara, Ri Bhoi, MAR 10: Maeshat Media Pvt. Ltd. India's first media outlet dedicated to covering economic activities of minority communities, has given away its 11th edition of business awards at the Maeshat Edupreneur Awards conferred at USTM (University of Science and Technology Meghalaya) here today. Maeshat Media, Founder President, Azam Campus, Pune was conferred with Edu Doctor Award-2022 while Dr. Abdul Qader, Founder Chairman, Shaheen Group, Kametaka was conferred with the Edupreneur of the Year Award. The keynote address of the conference was delivered by Dr. Frank F. Islam, Chairman and CEO of FI Investment group, USA. The conference was attended by economic experts, business lead-

## THE MEGHALAYA GUARDIAN

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## The Assam Tribune

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Business awards

GUWAHATI, March 10: Maeshat Media Pvt. Ltd. India's first media outlet dedicated to covering economic activities of minority communities, has given away its 11th edition of business awards at the Maeshat Edupreneur Awards conferred at USTM (University of Science and Technology Meghalaya) here today. Maeshat Media, Founder President, Azam Campus, Pune was conferred with Edu Doctor Award-2022 while Dr. Abdul Qader, Founder Chairman, Shaheen Group, Kametaka was conferred with the Edupreneur of the Year Award. The keynote address of the conference was delivered by Dr. Frank F. Islam, Chairman and CEO of FI Investment group, USA. The conference was attended by economic experts, business lead-

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# Mahbubul Hoque, P. A. Inamdar, & Dr Abdul Qadeer conferred with Edu Doctor Award



*Mahbubul Hoque, Chancellor of USTM receiving Maeeshat Edu Doctor Award-2022 from the hands of P. A. Inamdar, Founder President, Azam Campus, Pune (centre) at Golmez Edupreneur Conference held at USTM on March 10, 2022*

Maeeshat Media Pvt. Ltd, India's first media outlet dedicated to covering economic activities of minority communities, has given away its first edition of Edupreneur awards at the Golmez Edupreneur Conference held in association with the University of Science and Technology Meghalaya (USTM). Mahbubul Hoque, Chancellor of USTM and P. A. Inamdar, Founder President, Azam Campus, Pune & Dr Abdul Qadeer, Founder Chairman, Shaheen Group, Karnataka conferred with Edu Doctor Award-2022. The keynote address of the conference was delivered by Dr

Frank F Islam, Chairman and CEO of FI investment group, USA. The conference has been attended by economic experts, business leaders, entrepreneurs, social workers, and professionals from across India.

Addressing the gathering of entrepreneurs, P. A. Inamdar urged, "Let us not talk about anything negative. We have to talk how much we have achieved and how far we have to achieve for development." Emphasizing on imparting spoken English in all vernacular medium schools, he said that technology can create a much better environment and





*(From left) Prof. G. D. Sharma, VC, USTM, Waqar Naqvi, Managing Partner, RDVLLP Mumbai; Danish Reyaz, Managing Editor, Maeeshat Media; M. Nurul Islam, Founder General Secretary, Al Ameen Mission, Kolkata; P. A. Inamdar, Founder President, Azam Campus, Pune; Dr Abdul Qadeer, Founder Chairman, Shaheen Group, Karnataka and Mahbulul Hoque*

contribute to educational progress. He suggested all to think about how to empower neighbourhood small institutions.

Delivering the keynote address in the inaugural session, Dr Frank F Islam emphasized on the need for edupreneurship in India. "Much has been done for the development of education among the minorities in India, and unfortunately much remains to be done", he said.

Welcoming the guests, Mahbulul Hoque said that through institution building one can change the environment of a particular place and bring progress to the people of the area. He thanked all the participants for coming over to the North East and for their desire to contribute for the development of the people through promotion of education. "We as

Indians have to think for development of every citizen, not simply of the minorities", he added.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof G. D. Sharma, VC, USTM mentioned about National Education Policy-2020 and said that USTM is preparing 82 teachers for technology oriented courses so that the university becomes a global university through technology. "We have to establish peace in the North East region through the means of education", he added.

A magazine of Maeeshat Media was released on the occasion by M. Nurul Islam, Founder General Secretary, Al Ameen Mission, Kolkata and other dignitaries. Some of the distinguished participants in the conference include: Waqar Naqvi, Former CEO, Taurus Asset Management Company, Mumbai; Danish Reyaz,

Managing Editor, Maeeshat Media; Munir uz Zaman Deshmukh, Pearls Academy, Aurangabad; Rashid Nayyar; M Mohammed Tahir Madani, M Burhanuddin Qasmi, Director, MMERC, Mumbai; Moulana Mohammad Ilyas Nadvi, GS, AHAN Islamic Academy; Moulana Mutiur Rahman Madni, Founder, Imam Bukhari University, Kishanganj; M Azizurrahman, Founder, TCIS, Malda, Dr Nazibur Rahman, Principal, Kaliachak College, Malda; M Wajihuddin, Assistant Editor, Times of India, Mumbai; Zaya Ahmed Quadri Seerat Box from Delhi; Jasim Muhammed, Shilong; Hafeezur Rahman Kolkata; Gyasuddin Mondel Kolkata; Prof. G.D. Sharma VC USTM; Mrs. Ayesha Shakir Pune; Izhar Khan, Mumbai and Affan Ahmed Kamil from Araria.

# **Dr. P.A. Inamdar**

**An Iconic Architect of  
Modern Education Era  
of Indian minorities**







**By: Danish Reyaz for Maeshat**

Defeating the travails of poverty, if a man achieves success with sheer hard work and yet shies away from glorifying himself, he surely must be big-hearted. Dr. P.A. Inamdar from Maharashtra is one such great human being.

He is a successful Promoter builder and as well as a banker. However, most significantly, he is a visionary educationist and a philanthropist dedicated to working for the poor, needy students of all communities for their welfare and education.

Furthermore, he is a public intellectual with an excellent grasp of various subjects such as law, Indian constitution, all religion, education, agro-economics, social welfare, minorities Educational rights of Religious & Linguistic minorities under Article 29 & 30 of the constitution of India, of all religion, Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Jains, Sikhs, Buddhist, Parsis & Jews and more.

As elected President of Maharashtra cosmopolitan Education society, Pune he is a pivotal figure at Pune-based Azam Campus, a top-quality nationally known education and learning hub for all minorities. He is also instrumental in establishing many other educational trusts and institutions in different parts of the country.

His abundant contributions to education had led him to be the Government of India established Maulana Azad Foundation, New Delhi, as Vice-President and member of the Planning Commission on higher education, along with many such coveted posts.

Despite having multiple feathers on his cap, Mr. Inamdar remains modest and unassuming.

“All thanks to Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta’ala, who enabled me to chase education and knowledge even in the worst of times and made me pay back to the society in whatever ways I

could,” says Inamdar in all humbleness and gratitude to the Almighty.

While he is modest and cares a fig for personal glorification, he is exuberantly dedicated to his mission in life, i.e., working for the communities welfare and education of poor, needy and deserving.

He is an enthusiastic man loaded with innovative ideas and indomitable zeal to take the such communities forward.

### A pragmatic leader

Uncharacteristic of other Muslim leaders, Mr. Inamdar doesn't believe in painting a dismal picture of the past performance of the Muslims. But, according to him, prior to 1950 1% of Muslim and other communities girls were going to school after Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Constitution today i.e. 2022, 75% girls of all communities are going to schools he sincerely feels, dwelling on the negatives can impair all and educationally backward poor communities chances of progress & bright future.

He says, “To move forward we must first recognize that as a community we and other financially and educationally poor have done well since our Constitution came in 1950. Now No one can take that away.”

“It is the confidence of the past that will propel all of us to do better in the future.” He adds with a lot of conviction.

He is a rare breed of intellectual who kindles hope and sparks enthusiasm among the all community youths.

He says, “We all have suffered enough from the inferiority complex. Now, we have to talk the language of optimism and hope.”



There is no speech by him that talks about the negative of the past. Moreover, the speakers at functions held in Azam Campus are invariably told not to mention failures and victimhood but the positives so that the youths are filled with a “yes we

can do it” attitude.

### Poverty-stricken early life

To achieve so much in life, Mr. Inamdar had to wrestle against acute poverty in his childhood. “Today, I own almost everything. You name it, and I have it. But these things haven't come easily to me,” he says.

Although his father was a police inspector by profession, on retirement from the service. He started a business moving back to his hometown Bijapur (now in Karnataka).

But as ill-luck would have it, his father's business tanked, and the family consisting of 13 siblings slipped into extreme poverty. Nevertheless, despite every odds, Mr. Inamdar managed to pass his matriculation from a Marathi Vidhalay High School of B i j a p u r ( N o w Vijaypur) with flying colours.

Recalling those days, he says, “He has seen the kind of poverty you wouldn't have seen,

or heard, or even read in a book.”

With mere 15 rupees in his pocket, he arrived in Pune in 1965, unsure about his future. He had come to the city to study, but, with no money in hand, he had to manage on an ‘earn and learn’ basis.



Mr. Inamdar completed his BA (Hons) from the prestigious Shivaji University, Kolhapur, and ever since, there has been no stopping him.

## Successful Promoter and Builder

Mr. Inamdar has varied colours of achievements, but his first job was at the land records department. After 15 years of service and amassing immense knowledge about land matters, he took a plunge into the real estate business on a partnership basis.

His role was to provide real estate knowledge and devise business strategies for his partners who lacked that knowledge but had the money to finance the projects.

Mr. Inamdar was an astute realtor and became successful in a very quick time. He amicably parted ways to form his own real estate company called Ahura Builders, one of the best Builders and Developers in Pune.

His reputation in the field can also be gauged by the fact that he has served as President of the Promoters and Builders Association i.e CREDAI of Pune for 7 years. Also, he was elected as Vice President of the Maharashtra Chamber of Housing Industry.

## A smart banker

His genius was also on display in the banking sector after being elected as

Chairman of Muslim Co-op Bank, Pune.

The bank was in financial doldrums with only Rs. 6 Crores deposits, but after Mr. Inamdar took over and set the ball rolling, the bank's deposits increased to 400 Crores within a few years. What's more, the bank's branches increased from 4 to 10, widening its client base and income. Once stagnant in growth, this Pune Co-op Bank is now a thriving bank, serving first and foremost the poor and the needy. It became possible

cases, he has always taken the cudgel on behalf of the victims, of all communities.

It was his dogged fight that helped to include as many as 80 Muslim communities under the OBC category by the state of Maharashtra. It remains a seminal work that one could have done for the community.

He is an expert in laws related to linguistic and religious minorities, Other Backward Communities (OBCs), Co-operative Banking and

Co-operative Societies Acts, Land Acquisition Acts, Construction Industry, laws etc.

Given Mr. Inamdar's wealth of knowledge in the matter of laws, it is immaterial to ask whether he has a qualified law background or not. No, he doesn't have one.

But he is such an authority on law-related matters that people from all walks of life, including the

professionals and the government officials, consult him on various legal issues.

"I am approachable to all, however, people from linguistic and religious minorities and OBCs are more than welcome. Whether it is about their right to establish and administer educational institutions or any other rights guaranteed under the constitution I am always ready to guide and fight for their causes."



because of Mr. Inamdar's vision and befitting execution of his ideas. Bank has 26 branches with Rs. 6.50 Crore deposits Mr. Inamdar has never taken loan through out his life not even "Hand Loan" either from his or any other bank.

## A sharp legal luminary

Mr. Inamdar has a sharp legal brain as well quashing of state Govt. quota in private unaided educational institutions to many other important



Inamdar says quite assuredly.

## A health care entrepreneur

A versatile achiever, Mr. Inamdar has also dabbled in the health care system. "Hospitals are as important as the schools and colleges & financial institutions, I would say even more. What value is education or wealth if humans suffer from diseases?" says Inamdar.

According to him for Poor & needy please provide  
1) Education 2) Financial Support 3) Health care facilities. By this your responsibility for poor is satisfied.

His Inamdar Multispecialty Hospital at Pune is one of the best hospitals, providing quality health care to all at an reasonable cost.

Mr. Inamdar has roped in a distinguished panel of doctors equipped with advanced medical tools and equipment to treat patients. No wonder the hospital has a high success rate in sending patients back home smiling.

Mr. Inamdar makes it a point to donate generously to establish hospitals elsewhere in India and other public health causes in the same way as he does for educational institutions and charitable trusts.

## Transforming minority education

Mr. Inamdar is a man with impeccable commitment and passion for serving the people. No doubt, he has been doing laudable works in various areas of public interest, but it is the

education field where he has poured most of his blood, sweat, and tears.

The Azam Campus stands as testimony to his steadfast commitment to revolutionize education for poor.

Centrally located in Pune on sprawling 24 acres of land, the Azam Campus today is a wellspring of modern education, producing thousands of poor students who serve the country

education to the students from the Muslim minority and other weaker sections in Pune, the city in those days which was fast becoming a hub of education back then.

In 1948 the campus came under the Maharashtra Cosmopolitan Education Society (MCES). Azam Campus, since the beginning, it was performing decently, but the real transformation came about only after Mr. Inamdar was elected as its president.

He has been getting elected as its president since 1982 till today on the back of his stellar work for the campus till today.

"I know how poverty can affect one's education. I have seen that from very close quarters. I don't want today's generations, especially the poor, to go through that hardship," says Inamdar.

He further adds, "It is my mission to make available finest education to the poor and the minority so they can compete with the best of the best."

Under the stewardship of Mr. Inamdar, and his Governing Board hard working members the Azam Campus, from its initial 2 primary schools

and 2 high schools, has expanded to house 32 educational institutions (from primary to Ph.D.) and 12 professional colleges while teaching more than 27,000 students compared to 1,500 students it has in the early days.

Mr. Inamdar is a pro-active administrator. Instead of waiting for complaints to emerge, he makes the



and abroad in various capacities every year.

The Azam Campus derives its name from Haji Ghulam Mohammed Azam's a Mumbai-based Gujrati businessman who provided the fund for the land and infrastructure in 1925.

Hon'ble Haji Gulam Mohammad Azam's main aim was to provide



round of the campus on foot every morning. He meets the department chiefs and staff and asks for their problems to solve then and there.

“By doing this I save time and you know time is the money,” he says smilingly.

Soon after his regular morning rounds,

he could be seen wrapped in work-planning, reviewing, brainstorming with colleagues, or taking meetings in his office with no hint of tiredness. He is a workaholic.

When asked about the never-ending energy, he says with another smile on his face, “What I do is my passion. And passion doesn’t give you pain.”

While one can’t be left unimpressed by his energy and prolific ideas, another very important aspect of his personality has led to the fast transformation of the Azam Campus. Speaking clearly and convincingly, he comes across as a great communicator. And this communication skill has resulted in drawing lofty donations







for the campus from unexpected places. He always with great respect mentions names of two families one Mr. Mohammad Ali Rangoonwalla, Mrs. Banubai M.A. Rangoonwalla and their son Asif M.A. Rangoonwalla and second Late Abdul Razzak Allana his dynamic son Mr. Irfan Allana, Mrs. Fatima Allana for their financial support for establishing many professional colleges at Azam Campus named as Rangoonwalla and Allana colleges.

At the same time, by making good use of every penny donors gave, Mr. Inamdar has always earned their trust, thus keeping the door open for further donations.

### **Trust on computer-based education**

Mr. Inamdar is a visionary educationist who knew quite early i.e 2007 how

technology would transform the ways of teaching learning. Due to his foresight, now education at Azam Campus is fully digitized with the help of computers and other technologies.

He says, “It’s a crime to teach students with chalks and blackboards in a modern fast-changing world. This process will not make them ready for the world that has already taken a giant leap in terms of technology.”

Azam Campus has thousands of computers, and all are interconnected. In addition, every lab is equipped with LCD screens to make the learning process more productive. At the same time, all kinds of books are digitally available so that students can access them anytime and from anywhere inside the campus.

Mr. Inamdar says, “All children have same level of talent irrespective of religious, social, or financial

backgrounds. It is the lack of opportunities that drags them behind. However, technology can be a great leveller.” For poor and hence he opted for it.

Mr. Inamdar walks the talk. About 16,000 students in Azam Campus are from weaker and marginalized sections, but from Nursery , they are online; from class 3, they carry their email addresses; in class 5, they skillfully type in English, while from class 6, they can type in Hindi, Marathi and Urdu typing

A 5-year-old student from the Azam campus can surprise you by repairing or making a computer and mobile from scratch. There are hundreds of such poor students. This each student can do in 15 minutes.

The students are so proficient in Information technology that more than 7,500 students, even before





class 6, have passed MS-CIT, an IT course exam mandatory for any state government job in Maharashtra. In addition, about 3,000 students have cleared CCC, course which is a central government's IT literacy program.

Explaining the reason behind students sitting for these exams, Mr. Inamdar says, "When students from poor sections pass these exams and have a way with computers, it boosts their self-confidence and worth essential to do well in the future course of their journey."

It is important to mention that apart from e-learning and e-teaching, the Azam Campus is also e-administered with only a little pen and paperwork.

In addition to above Mr. Inamdar in 2007 onwards introduced spoken English course in 37 Pune Municipal Corporation Urdu, Marathi, Hindi school and other 45 school from nursery to 8th standards 45000 such students have been trained in spoken

English so far, from the financial support for this course by Azam campus. These poor back ground students speak fluent English better then me he says with smile.

### **Cleanliness is half of faith**

Much as education is essential, so is a clean environment for it. The brain needs peace to be productive, and if the surrounding is not clean, it can't be productive. Also, as per Islamic teaching, cleanliness is half of faith. And Mr. Inamdar is mindful of it.

The Azam Campus treats you with an immaculately clean environment. There is expansive lush green ground just as you enter. You can also find several flower gardens and numerous trees lining the streets inside the campus. In addition, the roads and streets are clean and free of squalor.

Besides the campus, the Pune Muslim Co-operative bank and other institutions Mr. Inamdar was

associated with tell the same story about hygiene and cleanliness.

### **A staunch secularist**

Mr. Inamdar is uncompromisingly secular. He is quite well-versed in scriptures and has participated in many comparative religion discussions and activities to achieve peace and harmony among different communities.

Despite Azam Campus' minority status, a large percentage of teachers, professors, and staff come from different religions. In addition, several students also come from other cast and communities and are studying without bias or favour.

Mr. Inamdar says, "At the campus, each individual is respected and rewarded as per merit irrespective of caste, creed, and religion."

At Azam Campus, all the students are taught to be tolerant and respect each other's customs and religions. The



harmony is easily reflected by seeing the students' camaraderie among themselves.

"I was never discriminated by any government or the people for grants or donations because I run a minority institution. Everybody helped me according to their capacity," says Mr. Inamdar, citing his example.

"We are a secular nation. Not only constitutionally but culturally and temperamentally as well." He adds.

### **Modernisation of Madrasa education**

For long Madrasas have taken care of the educational needs of the Muslims; however, with changing times, the Madrasa education system needs improvement.

"Madrasa leaders students have as much right to a dignified livelihood as the students passing out from the formal education system." Says

Inamdar.

As part of modernising of Madrasa education, he has convinced several Madrasas leaders across the country to teach new subjects like computers, English, Mathematics, etc., alongside their religious syllabus.

He says, "We know that Madrasa students are extremely disciplined and hardworking. If they are given a chance they can successfully compete with the others." Also in regular school education they can shine.

Mr. Inamdar suggests clubbing mainstream education with religious education so that students leaving Madrasas will have valid certificates to enter colleges or universities for further studies like any normal student.

According to him, "Madrasas should take advantage of National Institutes of Open Schooling (NIOS) which conducts exams for up to 12th standard and is recognised by all universities

and education institutes across India." His this initiative has started spreading in India Hon'ble Maulana Mahemood Madani sir and his team members have taken up the course to thousand of their Madrasa students

### **A man full of gratitude .:**

The kind of success Mr. Inamdar has achieved is awe-inspiring. With smart business acumen, vastly competent administrative skills, and an unbounded charitable heart, he has created great impact and transformation in every field he has worked in.

But when a tree is laden with fruits, it bends down. Similarly, Mr. Inamdar is a grounded man despite enormous achievements.

"I am nobody to do anything. Allah does this All glory to him," says Mr. Inamdar

When asked about his family's role in





his achievements, he expresses a lot of gratitude to all his family members, lauding their support through thick and thin.

“My 3 sons are well grown-ups, and are overseeing my businesses, allowing me enough time to spend on my labour of love which is working for the education of poor and weaker sections of the society,” he says with much satisfaction.

He has special gratitude for his wife, Mrs. Abeda Inamdar. “I have utmost respect for my wife who started as a custom and central Excise officer, raised our three children, and extended her helping hand in my businesses and also at Azam Campus,” says Mr. Inamdar. “I used to get amazed at her proficiency in dealing with so many things simultaneously,”

Today Mrs. Abeda Inamdar is a highly successful woman in her own right, standing shoulder to shoulder with Mr. Inamdar. She is now the Vice-President at Azam Campus, where two colleges are named after her i.e. Abeda Inamdar Senior College (Now

University and Abeda Inamdar Junior College as she donated her fortune to these colleges to get them functioning.

Winner of the Maharashtra Government’s ‘Savitribai Phule’ award for her services in women’s education, Mrs. Abeda Inamdar is the President of Maharashtra Medical Education & Research Centre, Pune, as well as Deccan Muslim Institute.

“I don’t know how much I am behind the success of my wife, may be nothing, but she is more than 200% behind my success,” saying this, he laughs and then adds, “I guess without her my journey could have gone astray.”

### **A consummate orator**

An orator par excellence, Mr. Inamdar has the uncanny ability to enthrall the audience in multiple languages such as English, Hindi, Urdu, Marathi, Kannada, etc.

During the interview, it was amply clear that he is also a fine communicator off the podium. He has a way with words and quickly draws you into his world

of ideas and knowledge. And you can’t help but listen to him with rapt attention.

### **Final impression**

Muslims have a preponderance of leaders, but very few are pragmatic, clear-headed, and visionary like Mr. Inamdar. Also, what makes him unique is his refusal to lament the backwardness of the Muslims perpetually.

His argument that self-flogging of the past could lead to a lack of confidence among Muslims to compete holds water.

Extremely hard-working and tech-savvy, Mr. Inamdar is determined to achieve fair access to quality education for the poor and needy. He himself spends his wealth for this cause.

He could be the new age icon for the Muslim youths. His education model at Azam Campus is worthy of being replicated elsewhere for a better outcome. We hope our community is listening.

# America's Crumbling Human Infrastructure



By Frank F. Islam



## The Critical Shortage of Teachers, Truckers and Tradespeople.

The first quarter of 2022, provided conflicting signals regarding the condition of employment in America.

678,000 new jobs were added in February according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). This far exceeded the expected job growth of around 400,000. Nonetheless, the BLS also reported that “The number of job openings was little changed at 11.3 million on the last business day of February...”

The unfilled jobs are important for all industries and occupations. The shortage of teachers, truckers, and tradespeople is critical.

This is the case because teachers, truckers, and tradespeople are pivotal to keeping the mind, circulatory system, and backbone of the country strong and healthy. They play essential roles in America's human infrastructure, which is crumbling, in part, due to shortages in these occupations.

What is the nature of these shortages, why do they exist and what can be done to address them? Let us examine each, beginning with teachers.



## The Teacher Shortage

The U.S. is short tens of thousands of teachers in public school systems nationally. In general, things are getting worse rather than better.

Lauren Camera in her March 28 piece for U.S. News & World Report notes that “As of January 2022, 44% of public schools reported having at least one teaching vacancy...Resignations accounted for 51% of the vacancies and retirements accounted for 21%.”

A press release issued by the National Education Association (NEA), which represents nearly 3 million educators on February 1, 2022 included the following:

- There are currently 567,000 fewer educators in America’s public schools than before the pandemic.
- Nationally, the ratio of hires to job openings in the education sector reached new lows as the 2021–2022 school year started.
- A survey conducted for the NEA, between January 14–24, 2022, revealed that more than half (55%) of members plan to leave education sooner than planned because of the pandemic, a significant increase from 37% in August.

The pandemic raised the teacher shortage above the line of visibility for the average citizen but it has been a problem for some time.

The Economic Policy Institute (EPI) issued a series of six reports, from March 26, 2019 to October 15, 2020, titled ‘Perfect Storm in the Teacher Labor Market,’ examining “the

magnitude” of the teacher shortage. The first report, drawing upon data from 2011 through 2015–2016, opens as follows:

The teacher shortage is real, large and growing, and worse than we thought.

When indicators of teacher quality (certification, relevant training, experience, etc.) are taken into account, the shortage is even more acute than currently estimated, with high-poverty schools suffering the



most from the shortage of credentialed teachers.

The final EPI report presents a policy agenda comprised of four recommendations to address the primary factors contributing to the teacher shortage:

- Raise teacher pay to attract new teachers and keep teachers in their schools and the profession.
- Elevate teacher voice, and nurture stronger learning communities to

increase teachers’ influence and sense of belonging.

- Lower the barriers to teaching that affect teachers’ ability to do their jobs and their morale.
- Develop professional supports that strengthen teachers’ sense of purpose, career development, and effectiveness.

The pandemic exacerbated all of the factors that drove people out of and away from the teaching profession. So, too, did some other

intensifying issues, such as state legislatures taking greater control over what teachers can teach and how they can teach; parents confronting and calling out teachers in PTA and school board meetings; and students themselves feeling emboldened to act out and challenge the teacher’s authority in the classroom.

There is no question that there is a need for a full court press to keep those teachers who the NEA survey shows are “feeling burned out” in the classroom. There is also a need for an innovative agenda to bring new teachers into the classroom.

Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona set out some of the elements

for such an agenda in a speech he delivered at an educational summit hosted by the Carnegie Foundation in San Diego on March 28. According to Lauren Camera, the draft of that speech included: Prioritizing the use of federal relief aid to address the teacher shortage emergency. Raising teacher compensation. Establishing teaching as a registered apprenticeship. Investing in teacher residency programs. And having

school districts boost the number of partnerships they have with educator preparation programs.

## The Trucker Shortage

While there are a number of people fleeing the teaching profession early, they are not doing so to become truck drivers and take the long haul. That's because the conditions of the average truck driver, from many perspectives, are far worse than those of teachers.

Peter S. Goodman of the New York Times, who has written evocatively about the plight of truckers, has put together the following five facts regarding them:

- The typical long-haul tractor-trailer driver registers 400 to 700 miles a day, or about 125,000 miles per year. That's enough to circumnavigate the globe five times.
- The typical driver works 60 to 70 hours a week, including time waiting to load and unload, while spending some 300 days a year on the road.
- Only 7 percent of the between 300,000 and 500,000 so-called over-the-road truck drivers in the United States are women.
- The median annual pay for tractor-trailer drivers, who are typically paid by the mile, was about \$47,000 as of May 2020. Since then, firms have raised pay while dispensing bonuses of up to \$10,000 for new hires.
- Trucks haul more than \$10 trillion of American goods per year, or more than 70 percent of all products shipped in the United States by value.

Those are troubling statistics. But, as the lead to Goodman's Feb. 9, 2022 story on trucker Steven Graves points out, they only tell part of the story, "A 1,000-mile journey through the middle of America reveals the

fundamental reason for truck driver shortages: It is a job full of stress, physical deprivation, and loneliness."

Given this, it is no wonder, according to the American Trucking Association, that in 2021 there was a record deficit of 80,000 drivers. And the turnover rate at an average trucking company is more than 90%.

It didn't use to be this way. As Robin Kaisler-Schatzlein observes in his March 15, 2022 New York Times article:

Before deregulation during the Carter administration, trucking was an industry with high union representation. But fears of inflation pushed the government to allow less regulated, nonunionized firms to compete with the unionized common carriers. That effectively took the bottom out of the labor market as companies raced to offer the lowest rates to customers wages were squeezed. Working conditions and pay cratered and truckers fled.

These conditions have persisted for decades. As Robert Costello, chief economist of the Trucking Association told Peter Goodman, "There is no silver bullet for fixing this. We need to get more people into the industry."

That is easier said than done. The Economics Department of The Trucking Association implicitly notes this in its Executive Summary of the Driver Shortage Update 2021, stating:

Because there is no single cause of the driver shortage, that means there is no single solution...The solution to the driver shortage will most certainly require increased pay, regulatory changes and modifications to shippers', receivers' and carriers' business practices to improve conditions for drivers.

If that solution is not developed and implemented, the Association projects

that the trucker shortage by 2030 could reach 160,000 drivers.

## Tradespeople Shortage

The root causes of the tradespeople shortage are similar to, but different, than the root causes for the teacher shortage and the trucker shortage.

Wikipedia provides the following definition for tradesperson: A skilled worker who specializes in a particular trade (occupation or field of work).

Skilled tradespeople include, among others: plumbers, electricians, carpenters, machinists, and HVAC technicians. They work in industries such as construction and manufacturing, and in many small family-owned businesses. Most skilled trades require specialized training, obtained through educational institutions, on-the-job training, and/or apprenticeships.

Just as with teachers and truckers, there have been shortages of tradespeople for decades. These shortages were exacerbated by the pandemic and by other factors relating to the demographics of those in the skilled trades at this point in time.

In a posting on March 3, 2022, Tom Barkin, President of the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, stated, "Skilled trades have a pipeline problem, and it may be getting worse."

Conger Industries, a material handling company headquartered in Wisconsin, has prepared an excellent report on the skilled labor shortage, which identifies many of the reasons for this "pipeline problem." They include:

- A disappearance of workplace apprenticeship programs since the 1980's.
- 2.3 million construction workers left the industry during the Great Recession but only 1.2 million jobs were added back after that.



- About 5,900 baby boomers leaving the workforce each day. By 2030, all baby boomers will be at least 65 years old.
- Elimination of shop and vocational training in high school and a shift toward college prep classes in this 21st century.
- A younger generation that is more interested in white collar jobs than blue collar ones.
- Many family-owned skilled trade businesses closing their doors when the owners reach retirement because there are no family members interested in being successors.

The pandemic unleashed a torrent of tradespeople retirements and resignations, and contributed substantially to making the pipeline problem worse. As examples, consider: As Megan Leonhardt reports in her November 16, 2021 blog for Fortune, “Manufacturing quit rates are up 78% since February 2020. And, according to a model developed by Associated Builders and Contractors, “The construction industry will need to attract nearly 650,000 additional workers on top of the normal pace of hiring in 2022 to meet the demand for labor.”

Just as with teachers and truckers, there are no instant or magical solutions to the tradespeople shortage. There are answers, though.

In a May 2020 article on “Top HR Challenges in Manufacturing” for the Society of Human Resources Management, Tamara Lytle provides tips which include: tap into local high schools and colleges to get the word out about manufacturing careers; recruit populations under-represented in manufacturing, such as women and veterans; and beef up apprenticeship programs.

Tom Barkin of the Federal Reserve Bank proposes:

Employers and localities will need to take ownership of their education, training and credentialing pipelines. Employers can provide their own training, or can partner with community colleges to provide equipment, instructors and apprenticeship opportunities. States can simplify their licensing requirements and debottleneck their credentialing processes.

### **Repairing America's Crumbling Human Infrastructure**

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, commonly referred to as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act, was signed into law by President Joe Biden on November 15, 2021. Although not as robust as the infrastructure bill that President Biden had proposed, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act will go a long way toward addressing the needs of America's crumbling physical infrastructure.

President Biden had also proposed a bill that would have focused on a human infrastructure agenda which included: expanding the child tax credits; established paid family and medical leave; funding universal preschool and free community college; and additional action on climate change. At this point, there is little traction and no action on those human infrastructure needs.

There may be an opportunity, however, to introduce and pass bipartisan legislation that would begin the process of repairing the problems of America's crumbling human infrastructure being created by the teacher, trucker, and tradespeople shortage. On March 2, 2022, Matt Sigelman, chairman of Emsi Burning Glass, and Ken Mehlman, partner at KKR and former chairman of the Republican National Committee, published a piece for Fortune titled

“These bipartisan solutions can help ease America's labor crisis.”

In their work, Sigelman and Mehlman set out the following four areas for legislation that can “ease that crisis”:

- Focus on jobs that move the needle for American competitiveness.
- Prepare students for jobs that matter.
- Build the skills of our existing workforce.
- Don't leave anyone behind.

They don't focus on teachers, truckers, and tradespeople specifically. But they might as well have. Think about it.

Teachers, truckers and tradespeople move the needle for America. When properly constructed and rewarded, these jobs matter for students. Securing workforce training and the right certificates and credentials provides the avenue for access to and advancement in these jobs. The shortage demands reaching out and enlisting women, people of color, and emphasizing skills-based as opposed to degree-based hiring.

In conclusion, as stated at the outset:

*...teachers, truckers and tradespeople are pivotal to keeping the mind, circulatory system, and backbone of the country strong and healthy. They play essential roles in America's human infrastructure which is crumbling, in part, due to shortages in these occupations.*

Properly designed and implemented bipartisan legislation can reduce significantly, and eventually eliminate, those shortages and begin the process of repairing part of our crumbling human infrastructure. It is time to invest in and to make Teachers, Truckers and Tradespeople a trifecta that will be a winner for the people in those jobs and for America itself.

# M F Husain & his autograph



By Mohammed Wajihuddin

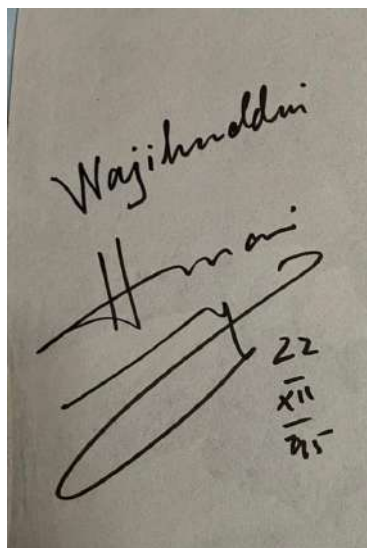
Yes Bank's co-founder Rana Kapoor, currently cooling his heels in jail for a Rs 5000 crore fraud, has reportedly revealed to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) that he was forced to buy a M F Husain painting from Priyanka Gandhi Vadra for Rs 2 crore.

There is no way that we can corroborate this sensational revelation. Both the close confidantes of the Gandhi family who, according to Kapoor, were aware of the deal--Murli Deora and Ahmed Patel--have joined Husain in the heaven. The full truth will not be known till we join "the great club" in paradise.

While both BJP and Congress trade charges against each other, let me recall my own memories of the maverick Husain. And the story of his autograph, one of my prized possessions. Frankly speaking,

he never gifted me a painting. Neither did I ever ask for it. And for me, buying one of Husain's paintings was...jane bhi do yaro.

After I moved to Mumbai in the mid-1990s from the highly politicised Delhi--



when was the last time in modern history Delhi remained non-politicised--I longed to meet Husain sahab. Which sane person with even a little interest in arts and culture didn't want to meet him?

Since I had drifted into journalism and chose to become a feature writer, I knew my work would one day take me to him. Since I was the only male in the female-dominated features' team in The Asian Age, I was asked to cover most of the events that began at dusk and ended post-midnight. There was hardly a party that happened in the city and I didn't attend it. Often I volunteered to go also because of a reason. It gave me chance to eat sumptuous dinner free. Since I was not paid for months and had already borrowed from a few friends that I had, I grabbed every opportunity to attend

film shootings, book and music launches as, apart from meeting celebs, they gave me opportunities to eat free food. I remember accompanying a female film journalist-colleague a couple of times to the Film City located in a



jungle where strange “animals” were rumoured to roam around.

So, one evening I landed at a party Parmeshwar Godrej had held. Now if it was a Parmeshwar Godrej’s party, M F Husain had to be there. They were great friends and their respect was mutual. This is where I first met Husain sahab. Barefoot, a jhola slung over the shoulder, a brush in hand, piercing eyes peering through thick glasses, salt-and-pepper beard. That image of our Picasso is etched in my mind till date. There was a spring in his feet. He kept moving, greeting friends.

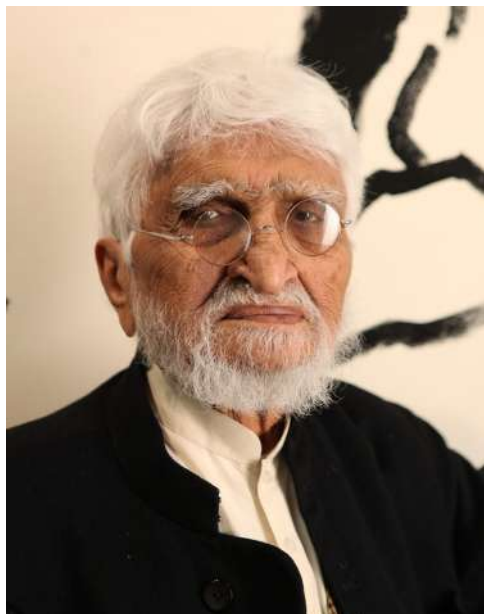
I tore up a blank page from a notebook I was carrying that evening. With trembling hands, I took that page to Husain sahab who was engrossed in conversation with a friend. “Apka autograph chahiye,” I blurted out. He looked at me smiling. “Kya naam hai?”, “he asked. “Wajihuddin,” I replied, spelling it out. He smiled again as he wrote with a flourish in black ink, first my name, and then signed it.

My joy knew no bounds. Those inimitable strokes. That famous signature which appear on his masterpieces adorning galleries, walls of famous hotels, restaurants, palaces, villas and private homes of the high and the mighty around the globe--from Mumbai to Miami, Toronto to Timbuktu. That famous signature was with me too. I was on cloud nine.

I met Husain sahab umpteenth times subsequently. In the pre-mobile phone era, I would call on his Colaba home number. After the mobile phone came in our lives, I would catch him wherever he was on the planet, in Pune today, Paris tomorrow. And for those who are not aware of Husain’s style of living and moving, he would keep tickets to multiple destinations in his pocket--Paris, New York, London.

He didn’t lack in money. Nor did in mood swings. Dil jahan, jab legaya, chala gaye.

Film journalist Ali Peter John who used to live in Andheri, not very far from Sahar International airport, would tell a fascinating story. Husain sahab would call Ali from his Colaba residence to join him at the coffee shop of one of five-star hotels near the airport as Husain had to catch a flight for, say New York post-midnight. They would meet, eat and chat. “Once two hours or so before his scheduled flight, he changed his mind and told me he was cancelling his flight to



New York and was going to London instead,” recalled Ali. That was Husain, a globe-trotter, world citizen and yet a great Indian at heart.

Much before some people thought India didn’t deserve this bohemian, progressive, great globally known artist and filed multiple cases in different cities of the country against him, forcing Husain to live abroad, we would regularly talk. Several times he asked me to join him over mutton chop or paya and naan at a restaurant in Colaba. I kept postponing. Never knew a precious thing doesn’t live

forever. Never knew he would choose to die and get buried in a foreign land because life in his own motherland was made difficult.

After he designed Munna Zaver’s Joy Shoes, a store at the Taj Mahal Hotel in South Mumbai, I did a small piece in the Indian Express on its reopening. In the tongue-in-cheek piece I had said, “We don’t know what the owners gifted the barefoot badshah. Perhaps not a pair of shoes.” Many years after Husain sahab’s death in London in 2011 at 96, I met Munna Zaveri in connection with stories on Ismaili Shias and their living imam the Agha Khan. I told Munna bhai about Husain sahab’s invitations to me which, in my foolishness, I never accepted. Munna bhai recalled that he and Husain sahab had dined once at a Chinese restaurant in London. “Husain sahab is no more. If not in London, we can have Chinese food at Cricket Club of India (CCI). Come over,” Munna bhai said. Two more friends and I joined Munna bhai over the fabulous Chinese food at CCI and remembered the immensely respected artist. .

As for Husain’s autograph, it is safely kept in a file at my house. Since the day my wife heard that even signatures of legendary artists like Husain fetch money, she has pestered me to auction it. “You are a fool. You never know how much it will get you. Contact your artists and art collector friends. Someone may get interested,” she keeps telling me.

So far my wife has not heard of Rana Kapoor’s story that he bought a Husain painting from Priyanka Gandhi for Rs 2 crore. I am dreading the day she will revive her old demand and tell me to try auctioning Husain’s autograph. People do part with prized possessions. I have not made up my mind yet.

# A clarion call for Madrasahs: Time for a paradigm shift in the system

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By Dr M A Mufazzal

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A ten days online conference was jointly called by All India Student Madrasa Forum and Ulama-e-Islam in Delhi, to discuss the future of Madrasahs in India, where a fair number of speakers from diverse sectors and walks of life have participated and expressed their views. The conference concludes with almost a general consensus that substantial changes are required to be introduced into the system to cope with modern challenges.

On the one hand, the conference was successful in instilling the idea of reform and getting the overwhelming responses and representation from all the sects and school of thoughts, while on the other hand it was unable to make out the know-hows and practicalities.

Voices for reforms in the Madrasa system are not new to be debated, it

has rather to be seen hand in hand with the project of Islamic modernism in a way or the other, which surfaced more starkly in the post-colonial period in general. The project of Islamic modernism was caught up into a vicious circle of its own multifaceted and contradictory perceptions, hence it could not manage to revive the declining fortunes of the Muslim societies. Consequently, on the one hand, the Islamic modernists increasingly transformed Islam from an elastic 'ethical and moral public discourse' to an inelastic, static and codified entity applicable mostly to a very limited, personal and family affairs. On the other hand in its passionate effort to become 'modern' the project ended up legitimizing westernization.

Without having a felt impact on





Muslim masses and societies the project of Islamic modernism remained an intellectual movement whereas Nadwa and Aligarh movements appear in the subcontinent as the variants of the project. To bring the project on ground it pulled social support from a notable section of westernized middle class who were eagerly looking for a relatively more liberalized version of Islam and this class never let it to percolate down the masses. Hence, it could not multiply and still restricted to have only one Aligarh Muslim University even after a hundred years have passed on it.

Owing to the creamy layer character of the modernist movement, the education system remained torn off between what is called religious or Islamic education (Dini Taleem) and secular education (Duniyawi Taleem), a division that has come to prevail in the medieval Muslim societies which became further cemented under western political hegemony. In addition, a number of factors were added, in the course of time, to keep this resistance intact still. Under attack by western rationalism and positivism

this process was further aggravated by transforming Madarassas (originally a learning seat) into a religious institution exclusively dedicated to impart Islamic education, while governmental and private schools became the seats of secular learnings. The Islamic modernists failed to arrest the increasing social gap between Madrasa's Islamic system of education and masses and westernized secular system of education and elites; hence the gap between the two got widened and Madrasa educations became increasingly irrelevant in the modern world.

Notwithstanding the objective of harmonizing the Islamic culture with western sciences, the modernists could not engage themselves with masses to dispel their apprehensions; their perception of compromising their religious identity and values while seeking secular education. This fear remained instrumental in widening the gap between the so called two systems of education i.e. Dini Taleem (religious or Islamic education imparted in Madarssas) and Duniyawi Taleem (secular education

given in public and private schools) in Muslim society.

The continued presence of diarchy in our educational system gave way to western secular educational institutions to exercise almost monopoly over state resources, power, and authority, while the Islamic education system and their products continued to suffer from disenfranchisement and marginalization at each level. The diarchal system was further institutionalized so much so that science and secular subjects were taught only either in English and French while Islamic subjects were offered either in Arabic or indigenous languages.

Bearing this background in mind, it is required to have rounds of deliberations on know-hows, modalities and practicalities in such a way that they could generate a strong social force for change down the masses as against the modernist movement that could not break the limited circle of middle class and intellectuals. The clarion call for change in Madarssas is still ringing to be answered.



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	Boys & Girls (Arts)	78	–	8	33	55	74	78	78	94.4%
CBSE	Boys & Girls (Sc.)	69	–	2	2	2	8	21	67	93.2%
	Total	2116	66	627	1429	1921	2038	2066	2114	–

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Board	Appeared		95%	90%	85%	80%	75%	70%	60%	Highest
WBBSE	Boys & Girls	1790	747	1394	1663	1752	1774	1788	1790	99.5%
CBSE	Boys & Girls	106	4	17	20	34	56	70	105	97.2%
	Total	1896	751	1411	1683	1786	1830	1858	1895	–



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# Why Modest Fashion is both a Movement and an Entrepreneurial Opportunity



By Sufi Roshan



We had long gotten past the days when we thought of fashion as something that turned back to tradition. Modernity wedded to tradition has been the mantra for much too long. That is why ‘hijab fashion’ or ‘muhajjaba models’ are the active registers in the fashion world.

The fashion world will now have to think about weaving and stitching garments and costumes to fit the needs of Muslim women as well, as the Hijab common to their belief has a worldwide reach and is not limited within religious circles [unlike how faith related costumes are for most other religions].

It encompasses consumers who dress modestly for religious and cultural reasons and those who do so for stylistic choices.

According to the State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2020/21, the modest fashion industry is valued at \$277 billion and is estimated to reach \$311 billion by 2024.

Turkey-based Ala Fashion Magazine is indeed a significant step in this regard; Ala — called the “Vogue of the veiled” in the Turkish news media — put that unlikely fusion of conservative Muslim values and high fashion forwards.

It won’t be a surprise if Turkey turns the ‘fashion capital’ of Hijab-wearing women and host fashion weeks parallel to those at New York City, London, Milan, and Paris; mainly because, unlike other parts of the world, such outward displays of religion is seen more as empowerment and modernisation of



the pious women in Turkey, thanks to the repressive measures by yesteryear secular elites, who were insistent on banning the wearing of headscarves in public institutions.

So it has been the result of a much fought-out revolution for the right to wear costumes of one's choice. Reformations undertook to make a society furthermore civilised and sophisticated, so now they need to brighten up their scarves with attractive colours and make their Hijab fashionable in all sought of means available, paying due respect to the religious views in this regard.

"For too long, the headscarf has been used as a political weapon, but there are millions of young women like me who wear the hijab; we are helping to break taboos. We are also overcoming the cliché that headscarves are only for old aunties," says Hulya Aslan, Ala's editor. [The New York Times, Istanbul Journal].

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Jana Kossabati, whose blog, Hijab Style, claims to be the UK's first style guide for Muslim women, says women are getting more experimental.

"Muslim girls are very conscious of the way they dress. When you wear a headscarf, you stand out as a Muslim, so what kind of message are you also sending out if you look drab or messy?" Kossabati started her site because there wasn't another like it in the UK, "but since it began ten months ago, many others have appeared," she says. [The Guardian, the hijab goes high fashion, by Homa Khaleeli].

The designers have a lot to explore about Islamic fashion because unlike the widespread concept that it just needs an abaya, burqa, and a headscarf made colourfully and glitter with stones/prints; it is all about mixing and matching costumes.

This blend of costumes in the right proportion and the right place by a maestro designer is always worth a try, especially as party wear or wedding gown, even for those sections of the people who believe they are not obliged to cover themselves up; the only thing which holds you back will be that, when short tunics turn into long gowns with sleeves, their prices also go up considerably.

A few have started recognising these facts, and it is easy for Muslim

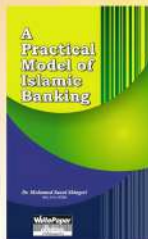
women to be fashionable in Britain these days, the bright leopard prints and H&M/Gucci shawls as hijab, the beehive styled hijabs worn with a variety of garments ranging from silk to denim materials will, of course, make you laugh at people who are still sleeping over stereotypes like Hijab is restrictive/oppressive/forced. But it is a fact that mainstream brands and fashion shows are reluctant to target Muslim women despite identifying that Muslim fashion is worth millions globally.

One could choose not to wear a headscarf and similar Islamic identities because it is un-styled or boring. Still, it has every right to get into the fashion weeks in Paris and elsewhere. Otherwise, alternative fashion worlds would raise to weave and stitch what the people wants and feels comfortable with – considering all regional, racial, faith-related diversities in garments and costumes. Anyway, the beauty of the hijab lies in a woman's choice to wear it, and there is no better way than to make it fashionable to make it her choice.



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# The significance of Halal meat

By Syed Ilyas Basha



There is a lot of talk going on these days about ‘HALAL’ (meat) in media in the country. While some are critical of it, the other group is in its favor. It is the ‘meat’ being debated upon, a non-vegetarian food for some. The fact is, India is one of the important producer and third largest exporter of meat in the world and earns huge income by way of valuable Foreign Exchange. With about 1.8 billion Muslims around the world who eat only halal meat, the halal-certified food and beverage market valued at \$415bn internationally, India occupies third position. Petty shop owners and road side kiosks in the country sell meat to local consumers; the animals are slaughtered in government established slaughterhouses spread over in towns and cities. Large Trading Houses export it at corporate level by processing it in their large slaughter houses at a larger level.

‘HALAL’ is not simply a tag, label or slogan as some may put it. It has a reason, philosophy and comprises certain specific actions. It has its scientific, wellness and divine reasons too. The term refers to things and procedures applied for slaughtering a particular (permissible) animal with the purpose to consume its meat. It is done in accordance

with Islam suggested procedure. Several conditions need to be fulfilled. The animal is laid down first and its throat is slit (dhabih) in a swift way causing deep incision with a very sharp knife, cutting the wind pipe, jugular veins, carotid arteries of both sides but leaving the spinal cord intact. “The name of Allah” or (Bismillah) (In the name of Allah) has to be called/recited by the person performing the act upon slaughter of each animal individually. This act results in a quick drop in blood pressure, restricts blood supply to the brain and allows the blood (considered to be toxic and harmful for the human health) flow out of the animal now collapsing, to the maximum. This abrupt loss of pressure results in the rapid and irreversible cessation of consciousness and sensibility to pain (a requirement held in high regard by most institutions.).

It is worth noting that not just meat or diet, the concept of ‘halal’ influences Muslims’ entire lifestyle including earning and spending, clothing work, leisure etc. and almost in all walks of life. It is prohibited to slaughter one for the sake of fun or as a part of practice, competition etc. The majority of Muslims ensure they eat halal food only



and also try to conduct themselves in a halal manner irrespective of place they are living in. It does not mean that they impose their choice on others. The belief by some that raising or transporting animals for slaughter may engender psychological stress or trauma, and those carry out this action get emotional and susceptible to domestic violence, social withdrawal, anxiety, drug and alcohol abuse is totally baseless and has no foundation. Such wrongly drawn conclusions are based on gossip and hearsay. The Islamic principles are based on the following verses from its holy scripture 'Quran':

1) He has only forbidden you what dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that over which any other (name) than (that of) Allah has been invoked; but whoever is driven to necessity, not desiring, nor exceeding the limit, no sin shall be upon him; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (Qur'an, Chap. al-Baqarah, ayah 173)

2) Forbidden to you (for food) are: dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which has been invoked the name of other than Allah; that which hath been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by being gored to death; that which hath been (partly) eaten by a wild animal; unless ye are able to slaughter it (in due form); that which is sacrificed on stone (altars); (forbidden) also is the division (of meat) by raffling with arrows: that is impiety. This day have those who reject faith given up all hope of your religion: yet fear them not but fear Me. This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion. But if any is forced by hunger, with no inclination to transgression, Allah is indeed Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. (Qur'an, Chap al-Ma'idah, ayah 3)

3) This day (all) the good things are allowed to you; and the food of those who have been given in the Book is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them; and the chaste from among the believing women and the chaste from among those who have been given the Book before you (are lawful for you); when you have given them their dowries, taking (them) in marriage, not fornicating nor taking them for paramours in secret; and whoever denies faith, his work indeed is of no account, and in the hereafter he shall be one of the losers. (Qur'an, Capt. al-Ma'idah, ayah 5)

4) Therefore eat of that on which Allah's name has been mentioned if you are believers in His communications. (Qur'an, Chap. al-An'am ayah 118)

5) Say: I do not find in that which has been revealed to me anything forbidden for an eater to eat of except that it be what has died of itself, or blood poured forth, or flesh of swine— for that surely is unclean— or that which is a transgression, other than (the name of) Allah having been invoked on it; but whoever is driven to necessity, not desiring nor exceeding the limit, then surely your Lord is Forgiving, Merciful. (Qur'an, Chap al-An'am, ayah 145)

6) He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah. But whoever is forced [by necessity], neither desiring [it] nor transgressing [its limit] – then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. (Qur'an, Chap. an-Nahl, ayah 115)

It is simply ignorance to believe that an animal being slaughtered feels it painful. According to Veterinarians, bleeding to death is one of the least painful and fastest deaths that can occur. While bleeding the body feels sleepy and heavier, the same way when you are exhausted and you need to sleep, this is common

between humans and most animals. They suggest that such pain can be reduced to a minimum by using a sharp instrument like blade or knife. Thus compared to being electrocuted to death or receiving a fatal blow to the head, slaughtering is indeed the most human way to kill an animal for consumption.

Nearly two billion of the world's population is Muslims; one of the fastest growing social groups. That amounts to a lot of potential in terms of economy in the marketplace, something that is already being widely exploited in countries like France and England.

Due to its scientifically established healthy features, Halal products are becoming increasingly important in Germany and other European countries as well. According to the report by Al Jazeera (Nov 26, 2017), there are about 1.8 billion Muslims around the world, who consume only halal meat. The halal-certified food and beverage industry is valued at \$415bn. Eight of the 10 largest suppliers of global halal meat are non-Muslim majority countries, with Brazil (\$5.19bn), Australia (\$2.36bn) and India (\$2.28bn) at the top. The remaining seven countries in the list share with France (\$0.8bn), China (\$0.7bn), Sudan & South Sudan (\$0.63bn) Netherlands (\$0.59bn), Somalia (\$0.47bn) and Turkey (\$0.46bn). (Reuters)

As is evident from the above referred report India is the third largest supplier of meat to the world. It exported meat (only beef) worth Ind. Rs.1029 Cr. during April 2018 to January 2019 period. This is according to the data available with the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), which works under the Ministry of Commerce, Government of India.

# Islamic Banking and Finance in India: One Must not lose Hope!



Dr. Shariq Nisar



Islamic banking is again in the news in India after Jammu and Kashmir High Court have issued notices to the Government and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Some enthusiasts hope that Islamic banking could be introduced in India through legal channels. Those who keep an eye on the political developments consider this only as a matter of whipping some passion at a time when some big Indian states are going to have provincial elections.

Earlier in 2015 Reserve Bank of India's internal committee (Known as Deepak Mohanty Committee) had recommended the introduction of Interest-free Banking as a trial by some commercial banks in India. Political tide by then had turned in

favor of Bharti Janta Party which led by the current Prime Minister had achieved roaring success in the Indian parliamentary election. Since then, it has become embarrassing even for the RBI to follow up on its own recommendation. Several pleas to the RBI and the Government have received a lukewarm response in the form of a mere statement that the current government has done a lot to improve financial inclusion in the country through the government's flagship scheme Jandhan Account (No frill banking account) and therefore there is no need for any further attempt on financial inclusion by the government. Nobody seems to understand that the demand for Interest-free banking and no-frill banking facility is not the same.





In 2009 when Kerala Government had decided to promote an Islamic Non-Banking Finance Company some right-wing political activists led by a maverick stalwart Dr. Subramaniam Swami had opposed the move citing the decision to be against India's professed secularism and on account of weakening the autonomy of financial regulators in favor of so-called Shariah advisors. The High Court of Kerala had decided that floating a company working under shariah principles is neither a compromise on Indian secularism nor a manner of ceding any regulatory authority to the shariah advisors. The company since then is working albeit on a very low profile.

In the same year, Central Government Owned GICRe had started offering Retakaful facilities to Takaful companies spread across the Middle East and Southeast Asia. The company has been very smartly marketing its Retakaful services over the last one-decade but without any explicit marketing through its website. This has kept the company's business growing without any undue controversy. Indian mainstream players have a lot to learn from this strategy.

One may also recall that in 2014 State

Bank of India owned SBI Mutual Fund had proposed to launch SBI Shariah Equity Fund, but the plan was scuttled on the eve of its launch. While developments of Islamic Finance at the official level look disheartening it's encouraging to note that Islamic finance has been taking deeper roots within the community-owned informal groups, societies and by adopting to other legal formats. Several state-level cooperatives credit societies have come up across the length and breadth of the country that is now doing financial intermediation among their members through Murabaha and Ijarah products. Some have also started experimenting with Musharaka and Mudaraba type of facilities. Many Chambers of Commerce have started encouraging and facilitating their members to meet each other's financing needs without resorting to external capital support. These all are at various experimental stages and with the passage of time, it will definitely improve financial understanding and experience.

Another positive development comes on the front of human development. During the last ten years, many youngsters have gone abroad to study Islamic banking and finance,

most of them to INCIEF and many others to the UK and the Middle East. India now has a good pool of Islamic finance professionals with global education and experience. This availability of talent has immensely improved the creativity which is visible in the practices of the new-age Islamic finance institutions. Equity and profit-linked debentures not only meet Shariah criteria of linking risk and reward but this is tax-efficient – a luxury that was not available to old-age-Islamic financial institutions.

The emergence of Fintech has further revolutionized the thinking behind the Islamic finance concept. Mutual Health care products are under pilot testing which if successful can revolutionize the availability of Mutual Takaful in the country.

Indian IT companies are already serving lots of Islamic financial institutions globally. Their experiences are available to Indian aspirants in a much cost-effective manner. India provides the most lucrative Islamic finance opportunities globally it's only a matter of time when all the independent experimentation will lead to the creation of the next Islamic finance unicorn from India.

# BoJo in India

## *Indo-UK Ties On A New Track?*

*The overall lacklustre visit to India by the British Prime Minister to India, underlines the fact that the UK can't take India for granted, and has to treat it as a bigger partner*



By Asad Mirza

In Persian there is an old proverb: 'Amad'an, nashist'am, ghuft'am, barkhas'tam', meaning they came, they sat, they talked and then dispersed. It actually means to say that nothing substantial was achieved by the visit or the talks. The same could be said about the recent visit by the British PM Boris Johnson to India, after his two previous visits scheduled last year, were cancelled due to Covid pandemic.

### **BoJo in India**

The diplomacy nowadays, thrives on optics. On this count the BoJo visit clicked all the boxes, but was also marred by angry reactions on the social media on photos showing him in the driver's seat at a JCB bulldozer. Perhaps his advisers were unable to connect the continuing controversy over bulldozers being used by the establishment against the minorities across India, or his close connections with the owner of the JCB, Lord Anthony Bamford, an old Conservative party donor and supporter, overweighed the local sensibilities.

The Gujarat leg of his visit, a carbon copy of his Home Secretary Priti Patel's 2015 visit to the state, was in essence aimed at garnering the support of the Gujarati electorate back home, keeping an eye on his uncertain political future.

In Gujarat he also met with Gautam Adani at his company's head quarters. BoJo described the feeling of being in Ahmedabad similar to as those of Sachin Tendulkar and Amitabh Bachchan, two Indian icons used for boosting his own public image and trying to resonate or connect with the Indian audiences.

In New Delhi, he referred to Prime Minister Modi as a 'khaas dost' and continuously as Narendra during his speech at Hyderabad House. But no more 'khaas' treatment to the Indian demands of a relaxed Visa regime and post study work for the Indian students, an indication towards which was given in Ahmedabad, but not granted finally.

### **Bilateral Cooperation**

His main focus remained the FTA between the two countries, as he expected to take back home something substantial in economic terms, particularly after his failed Brexit strategy. He urged the negotiators on both sides to hasten the pace of negotiations so as to have a final document ready for signing by Diwali in October. Certainly an over ambitious demand for an agreement, which has been under negotiations for more than last ten years.

Though the Indian side stated that it would demonstrate the same speed and urgency that it did in concluding



recent FTAs with the UAE and Australia in recent months, yet nothing can't be said for sure about an Indo-UK FTA, as there are many thorny issues on both sides.

British trade with India, the world's second-most populous country with nearly 1.3 billion people, was worth 23 billion pounds (\$29.93 billion) in 2019, much lower than the UK's trade with some much smaller economies such as Ireland and India's trade with smaller countries like Belgium which stands at 18 billion pounds.

### **Russian-Ukraine War**

In addition, though not expressed overtly by the British side and neither by BoJo, the Russia-Ukraine war had an ominous shadow over the visit. Though his foreign secretary was very firmly told by New Delhi just 22 days before his visit that India is not going to change stand on its ties with Russia, BoJo thought he might be able to convince New Delhi to do so.

However, predicting the Indian response he had set the tone for this when even before meeting the PM Modi he had said that he understands India's historic ties with Russia, but still chose to lecture New Delhi on its

relationship with 'autocratic' states, though this time also New Delhi politely stood its ground.

The manner in which the visit was seen by both sides, was remarkable by the manner in which the two prime ministers delivered their speeches at Hyderabad House. While BoJo avoided mentioning Russia, Mr Modi reaffirmed the ties with Russia.

### **India-focussed issues**

Though the British side is referring to a host of agreements signed in different sectors, and BoJo's statements on counter-terrorism task force being constituted and against the Indian economic fugitives currently at home in the UK, everyone is certain that they are just mere words, nothing substantial. His announcement of One billion pounds trade deals and creating 11,000 jobs is just peanuts for India.

Both sides also agreed to deepen bilateral defence and security cooperation. India welcomed Britain's Indo-Pacific tilt and joining the Indo-Pacific Economic Initiative; on its part Britain announced the decision to ease the transfer of defence equipment and technology for India and also for developing an advanced jet fighter.

But overall, nothing concrete was inked down by both the sides and the technology transfer could be viewed as just a gimmick to wean India away from Russia.

Overall, the two sides showed commitment to joint research, development and production of advanced weapons and related technologies. The two PMs also issued a statement on strengthening partnership in cyber-security domain, and plans to boost cooperation on mitigating climate change and promoting clean energy. But these agreements should be seen as just part of a normal bureaucratic visit.

The visit seems to be a hastily stitched plan, with no long-term goals and no narrative setting, and was unable to achieve anything bilaterally. In the end BoJo was unable to get anything substantial from India and his political troubles back home persists. The coming days will show how he'll be able to deal with them and survive as even his closest Asian origin lieutenants like Rishi Sunak and Priti Patel, who were predicted to take over from him, are facing politically damaging controversies of their own.



# Sixth-grader Maryam leads library movement

Mirza Maryam is inaugurating the 12th library in the name of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam. Given that she set up the first Mohalla library on 8 January 2021 in the balcony of her own house, the growth of her project is phenomenal.

In no time, more than 300 books in a small cupboard had become the centre of attraction for the entire locality. Children could take any book to their home for reading for free. The doors of this library were open between 5 to 6 pm.

Mirza Maryam and her father Mirza Abdul Qayyum noticed that the children were taking a lot of interest in books. It was from here that the mission of opening Mohalla libraries in the poor settlements of Aurangabad started.

Their slogan 'You give me 5000 rupees, I will give you a library' has since turned into a movement.

Maryam says that out of Rs 5,000 donated or pooled in a neighbourhood, she buys a cupboard for stacking the book for Rs 3,000 and books worth Rs 7000. Children are made in charge of book allocation and maintenance of the library.

Maryam is a sixth-grader in Iqra

Primary School, Aurangabad. From a very young age, Maryam was fond of reading books. Whenever she went to her father's book shop she would bring home some books of her choice. Gradually, she had a stock of 156 books.

book although he is too young to read. Maryam says once she asked Nadeem that does he take the books since he is too young to read these. He told her that he gives the book to his grandmother, who then reads the stories for him.



It was his grandmother who would send him to get a fresh book.

Today, Mirza Maryam's Mohalla Library has become a mission. She is taking a pledge to open 50 libraries in Aurangabad in a year. She is getting support from the Reed and Lead Foundation and Fame to accomplish this.

Every library of Mirza Maryam is run by children. Along with Maryam, a

team of 30 children is handling this responsibility diligently. Parents are also surprised to see the interest of children in books and are constantly encouraging them.

Maryam's initiative has proved that children are interested in books provided they have access to the library.

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# Mohalla libraries bring kids back to the world of books

*In order to develop reading habits amongst children, a 7th standard student from Aurangabad district in Maharashtra has started a 'Mohalla Library' in a slum area. She has opened 24 Mohalla Libraries in different places at Aurangabad within a span of just one year beginning 8th January 2021.*

This small initiative by Mirza Maryam a 12 years old girl from Aurangabad Maharashtra is now spreading all over Maharashtra. Inspired by Maryam's Mohalla libraries, even Telangana State Urdu Academy has opened a children's corner for kids to develop reading habits among children. This is a unique concept of micro library with micro funding introduced by Maryam.. Covid-19 has brought some positive as well as negative impact in the lives of all the students. The positive impact is that those who can afford have adopted the digital studies, whereas students staying in slum areas can't afford the use of digital platforms so are unable to go ahead with the studies. Keeping this in mind a 7th standard student from Aurangabad district in Maharashtra has started a 'Mohalla Library' in a slum area. This is the first of its kind library started in Aurangabad. Maryam says Just before the lockdown began; she had accompanied her father (Mirza Abdul Kayam) to visit Aurangabad's famous Maulana Azad Library and Research Centre. After visiting the

library she was disheartened to find that there was no children's section in it and the library didn't stock books for children. From that day she began borrowing books. One more thing that focused her to come up with this unique initiative is she used to see kids wasting their time and playing all the time when schools got closed due to covid. Post Covid many more libraries are opened in Aurangabad in Maharashtra. In order to attract kids and inculcate reading habits in them, Mohalla library has come up with a concept "kitab padho aur inam pao" which means read and win. This concept helped kids to reads books and as they were given gifts this initiative attracted many kids. Maryam's father gifted her 150 books last year. Now she has more than 150 books. She has kept all those books in the library. So now there are more than 500 books in the library. The children take their favorite books home and return them in 3 days. Mirza Abdul Kayam, father of Maryam and a founder of city-based Read and Lead Foundation, said his daughter had a collection of books,





which she decided to utilize for the benefit of the public. After she began a maiden Mohalla library for children up to 10th standard in the city, several such initiatives have come up in towns of Jalna, Indore, Beed, Jalgaon, and Ahmednagar. Even Telangana State Urdu Academy has opened a children's corner for kids to develop reading habits in them. This initiative is helping to develop reading interest among the children, which is actually helping them to acquire knowledge and develop reading habits. This will inturn

provide more readers to the existing big libraries, which will ultimately provide great leaders and good citizens to the community,society and nation in large.

Now children and parents in many towns are approaching Mariyam to get ideas and start their own libraries which will benefit the kids. Till now more than 10,000 kids have benefited from this noble initiative.



M a r y a m is on her mission with a slogan “Tum mujhe 10 hazar rupee do, main Tumhe ek library D u n g i ” (Give me 10 Thousand rupees, I will give you one library). Maryam is determined to open more 25 libraries in year 2022.

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