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M Azizur Rahman
The Innovative Edupreneur
from North Bengal

December 2022

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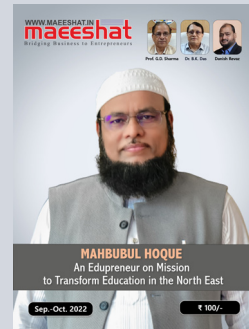
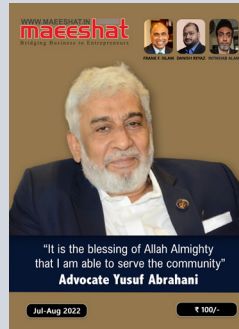
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From The Editor's Desk



Danish Reyaz

It was a cold evening in December last year when I met Azizur Rahman in Kolkata in the office of Amanat Foundation. Wearing a formal white shirt and an intermittent smile, Azizur Rahman was attentive towards me while discussing the preparation for the forthcoming All India Minority Business Summit.

Leaving this meeting after a warm discussion, we shook hands, and Azizur Rahman obliged me by inviting me to his office and putting his visiting card in my hand. I thanked him and left. Later a month passed, and I recollected this meeting with Azizur Rahman and dialled his number. He took no moment to recollect our meeting. Mr. Azizur Rahman re-invited me to visit his endeavours.

Azizur Rahman is a widely popular and respected man in his native town Jalalpur. When I reached there, it didn't take long to figure this out through my interaction with the locals in this bustling town in Malda district in the northern part of West Bengal.

Jalalpur is known for Starling Silk Mills Pvt. Ltd., India's leading manufacturer and exporter of silk products which is founded and owned by Azizur Rahman. The company has been a source of employment for thousands of households. Besides being an entrepreneur par excellence, Azizur Rahman is also the champion of promoting quality education, especially among the minority who have fallen off the development radar for multiple reasons.

He founded Tarbiyah Cambridge International School (TCIS) in Jalalpur, Malda, in 2014. This CBSE-affiliated English medium school has gained much popularity since the beginning for its unique way of providing academic education integrated with Islamic teachings about moral upbringing.

Azizur Rahman is all for making TCIS a brand by opening hundreds of branches throughout the state. He has already managed to establish more than a score of branches of the school in a quick time. His dream is to see the children of

unprivileged people calling the shots in public life because of their talent, which he has been trying to blossom through his education model.

From an ordinary background, Azizur Rahman has risen to a position of eminence in the relentless pursuit of his vision to impact the lives of common people through education and employment.

Taking into account the contributions and hard work of Azizur Rahman in social causes, his journey so far merited a cover story in this edition. It will help our readers understand his works, struggles, and vision and derive inspiration from him.

Other than that, this month's edition is also enriched with myriads of other interesting stories, news, articles, and opinions. In particular, the reader will relish reading how Qatar hosted a very successful FIFA World Cup, proving the western media criticism wrong. There is a story of a Kashmiri youth, Dr. Rukhshar Saeed, who runs a frozen food venture in the valley, exemplifying a trend of Kashmiri women breaking barriers and trying their hands at self-employment and entrepreneurship.

Another story reveals how Syed Manzar from Mumbai is trying to popularise Urdu with his aesthetically and technologically advanced fonts and several other tools.

Also, the edition talks about the plight of Srilankan Muslims sandwiched between any fighting and peacekeeping effort between Singhalese and Tamils in North-Eastern Srilanka.

So, enjoy reading, and do write us back with your valuable suggestions and opinions.

India-GCC bilateral trade hitting over \$154 Bn in financial year 2021-22

By: Muskan Mustaqeem



In the fiscal year 2021-22, bilateral trade between India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) reached over \$154 billion, making the GCC-India the largest trading partner block. This was reported by India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

India's annual exports to the GCC countries were worth approx. \$44 billion, while imports were worth around \$110 billion (non-oil exports of USD 33.8 Billion and non-oil imports of USD 37.2 Billion). Around \$14 billion was also exchanged in services between India and the GCC countries. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry reported \$5.5 billion in exports and \$8.3 billion in imports for India in this sector.

Almost 35% of India's oil imports and 70% of its gas imports come from the GCC. During the fiscal year 2021-22, India spent over \$48 billion on crude oil imports from the GCC, and another \$21 billion on LNG and LPG imports. Over USD 18 billion is being invested in India by the GCC – Ministry added.

During the high-level meeting, India's Commerce and Industry Minister Shri Piyush Goyal and the Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation

Council (GCC), His Excellency Dr. Nayef Falah M. Al-Hajraf, announced plans to move forward with negotiations on an India-GCC Free Trade Agreement. Both the countries have made substantial progress on all issues of mutual interest across the full spectrum of their bilateral economic relations.

The Ministry further stated that- "Both sides agreed to expedite conclusion of the requisite legal and technical requirements for formal resumption of the FTA negotiations. The FTA is envisaged to be a modern, comprehensive Agreement with substantial coverage of goods and services".

It was emphasized by both parties that the FTA would boost the economy, increase employment, improve people's quality of life, and provide wider socio-economic opportunities in India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. As a result of the complementary ecosystem of the business and economic ecosystems between India and the GCC, both parties have agreed to significantly increase the scope and diversity of the trade basket to take advantage of the vast opportunities that exist.

47th All India Sociological Conference concludes successfully at USTM

ISS & USTM observe Hundred Years of Sociology in India

A day after a bomb blast in Europe in 2018, a teacher at a popular Noida school read out headlines to her Class VI students. A student loudly called out the name of the only Muslim boy in class; 'Yeh kya kar diya tumne?' he asked. The teacher heard the exchange but did not say a word. Some of the things that kids are apparently calling their Muslim peers in primary schools are 'Osama', 'Baghdadi', and 'Mullah', and are asking them to 'Go to Pakistan.'

Katuwa, Jihadi, and Mussallah are other such slurs that are non-Muslim kids' favorite vocabulary, to address Muslim peers in school.

Some thirteen years ago, a friend's son was in a fancy Delhi pre-school, voted by a leading education journal, as "the best preschool in India". It decided to schedule its annual PTA meeting on Eid-ul-Fitr – the 'big' Eid, a joyous celebration at the end of the month-long Ramzan fast. I don't have to tell this audience that it is the biggest Muslim festival of the year,

on par with Diwali for Hindus and Christmas for Christians. The mother of the Muslim child gently chided the Principal and the teacher but eventually went for the PTA.

But there was more to come. One

was in fury, the same preschool had declared Karva Chauth a holiday because all the teachers were busy fasting for the wellbeing of their husbands. She ranted, she raved but she 'did not escalate the matter'. "I

don't want my three and half-year-old child to be singled out as the one with the troublesome mum," she said.

Salman, 13 years old, was one of three Muslim boys in Class VIII in the upper primary

school at Nandnagri, in Delhi. Most children participating in cultural programs are Hindu. I want to participate in cultural programs too. I learned a patriotic song but the class monitor in charge of deciding who gets to participate refused to take me to the event.... Sometimes I don't like being Muslim. I feel insecure when there are Hindu-Muslim fights because most Hindus get together and surround the Muslims. My mother asks me not to stray too far from home when there are communal tensions.





Sara, 14 years old, in Class VIII in a government upper primary school in Nandnagri, regrets choosing Urdu instead of Sanskrit as her second language. All the girls who chose Urdu sat in the same classroom. There are some teachers who... say: 'you Muslim people have no brains, you read the Quran and pray to Allah, but don't respect knowledge.'

... A few months ago, we had a substitute teacher who said the floods in Uttarakhand happened because Muslims have opened meat shops there. She said that it's a place of worship for Hindus but Muslims go there and treat God badly. It's because of Muslims, she said, the disaster happened, to pay them for their sins. We felt really bad when she said all this about Muslims. The whole time she kept saying Muslims do this, Muslims do that, and no one in the class objected because we were afraid of being hit by her.

Sahir is 12 years old, in grade 5 in a government school in Qutab Vihar in southwest Delhi says; we don't feel like going to school because the teachers always single us out to beat us. The Hindu boys laugh at us. The teachers don't let us participate

in any sports. Class monitors are always chosen from among Hindu boys and they always complain about us Muslim boys. The teachers never believe us. They insult us by saying 'You children come to school only to eat and to collect [scholarship] money, but you don't want to study.' Whenever they check our workbooks, they make negative comments about our work and throw the workbooks at our faces.

Another boy, Javed, from the same school, said: The Hindu boys are allowed to go to the toilet but we are not given permission. Whenever the teachers are angry, they call us Mullahs. The Hindu boys also call us Mullahs because our fathers have beards.

One of our classmate's father came to submit a form to the school. The teacher referred to him as 'the man with the beard' and made fun of him in front of the whole class and laughed at him. All the Hindu children laughed too and we Muslims felt terrible. ... Only the Hindu boys are happy in this school.

So, this is where we are today. A nation forged from the fires of Partition was promised a secular India but 75 years

later the nation still blames 9 and 10-year-old Muslim children for sins their fathers did not commit. Why our classrooms are paying this price for such tough conversations we never had?

The Indian education system is one of the largest in the world with over 1.5 million schools, 8.5 million teachers, and 250 million children. If that is what is happening in non- Madarsa Schools, then advocating reform in the Madrasa system of education should think twice about which system of education needs reforms, the non-Madrasa school or the Madrasa. Is calling Muslim children names, an act in nation-building or an anti-national activity? The moot point here is those who are working for reforming the education system in India should stop the kettle from calling the pot black.

This piece is an excerpt from Farah Naqvi's talk delivered on October 19, 2022, at the 5th Anita Kaul Memorial Lecture, 2022, titled 'The Elephant Outside the Classroom: Education for a Democratic India.' It was delivered at the India International Centre, New Delhi

Who will listen to the plight of Sri Lankan Muslims



By: Syed Ali Mujtaba



Representational Image (Photo: Getty Images)

Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe has announced his intent to resolve the long-standing North-East Tamil national question. This perhaps he is doing at the behest of India. However, he has ignored the problem of problems of the North East Muslims which are indivisibly intertwined in any solution to the Tamil problem. Muslims are a minority within the Tamil minority.

Any attempt to ignore the Muslim problem would belie any comprehensive solution to the North East where two major minorities reside in Sri Lanka.

There has been a pattern since the independence of Sri Lanka in 1948. For example, during Prime Minister Srimavo Bandaranaike's government Muslims were persecuted and their economy was crippled. Her Justice

Minister Felix R Dias Bandaranaike arrested and detained several prominent Muslim businessmen.

Then President JR Jayewardene forcibly merged the East with the North under Emergency Regulations in 1987. This was amidst widespread protests against the Indo-Lanka Treaty. He thereby gave the Northern Tamils a statistically undue Tamil majority in the East, though Tamils were a minority of 46% in 1946 before independence and 42% in 1981. There have been 39% Muslims and the Sinhala population is ever increasing and reaching 25% in 1981.

JR Jayewardene forced merger led to the Muslims becoming a minority under another minority resulting in their much-misunderstood demand for autonomous status in the eastern province and separate from Tamil rule

in the North East Province.

Muslims' resistance to JR's merger led to the brutal expulsion of the Northern Muslims from the North and there was the massacre of Muslims in 1989 and there were several mass killings of Muslims in the East. In 2005, LTTE Eastern leaders too broke away from the Northern-controlled LTTE signaling Eastern Tamil's opposition to the merger. By 2006, the Supreme Court held the forced merger of North and East provinces as illegal.

There was an anti-Muslim campaign in 2012 and anti-Muslim riots in 2014, 2017, and 2018. The Presidential Commission on the Easter attacks of April 2019 is blamed on the anti-Muslim violence resulting in the terrible Easter Sunday attacks on Christian churches.

There has been a tradition that Tamils and Muslims have lived in Sri Lanka as equal citizens and with dignity alongside the Sinhala Buddhist majority. For example, Tamil Congress and Muslim League were integral parts of the United National Party governments, and Muslim leader Dr. MCM Kaleel served as United National Party treasurer and chairman.

However discriminatory policies of the government forced Muslims to think in terms of separate terms. Frustrated Muslims formed the Sri Lankan Muslim Congress, with the slogan of Islam and unity. However, Islam disappeared and Muslim Congress was divided into more than half a dozen splinter groups with a disgusting and well-known reputation for compromising the community's interest for perks and positions.

The more recent one was the 20th amendment, where Muslim Minister Ali Sabry supported the amendment and several Muslim MPs voted in

its favor making President Gotabaya Rajapaksa a dictator.

Earlier President Chandrika Kumaratunga initiated a move to sign a joint mechanism with the LTTE for the rehabilitation of Tsunami victims. But the Muslim tsunami victims were ignored in the agreement to please the LTTE which opposed Muslim participation.

In negotiating and signing the Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure (P-TOMS), President Kumaratunga did exactly what Ranil Wickremesinghe did when he signed the Ceasefire Agreement, with the LTTE on February 2002, when Muslim interests were summarily dismissed.



Saudi Arabia built 500 houses to Tsunami affected Muslim families. Sinhala extremists, led by Buddhist monks, opposed it. Thus the houses were not given to the Muslims.

Once the LTTE war ended in 2009, Muslims tried to rebuild their lives only to realize that government-sponsored violence started against them. They burnt Muslim-owned houses, commercial and industrial properties, and even mosques where Holy Quran was first urinated and then burnt.

In the midst, there appeared Bodu Bala Sena (BBS), a government-backed violent organization that terrorized

Muslims. Myanmar's so-called Buddhist monk Asin Wirathu, the face of Buddhist Terror, was invited and accorded more than a head of state honor in Sri Lanka.

In March 2018, during attacks in Central hills, Muslims were attacked and looted and their properties including mosques were burnt causing billions of damage and depriving their livelihood.

Organized violence against Muslims proved that the racist policies continued. These attacks culminated in the Easter Sunday bombings on 21 April 2019 and plunged the country into chaos.

The Muslim community had nothing to do with this carnage. Yet Muslim men, women, and even children were treated with hatred. The government dispatched troops wearing boots and dogs to search the mosques to frighten the Muslims. Muslim women were asked to remove Burka/ even though Covid 19 rule forced everyone to wear masks.

Battered, beleaguered, and helpless Muslims have not taken up arms. Instead, they raised their hands in their daily five times prayers and left it to the Creator to have mercy on them.

Now in the midst of political confusion and economic bankruptcy nominated Member of Parliament Ranil Wickremesinghe, who was defeated in the elections and his party UNP wiped out, was appointed as prime minister and then as president. It was in this chaotic political environment President Ranil Wickremesinghe offered peace talks to Tamils, ignoring Muslims. Thus the indifference towards Muslim grievances continues unabated and there is none to listen to the plight of Sri Lankan Muslims.

FIFA Qatar: Host nation, you are the champion

By: Adv. Mohammad Ilyas



Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani wraps a robe around Lionel Messi on stage next to the FIFA World Cup trophy after Argentina won the Qatar 2022 World Cup final. (Reuters)

On 20th November 2022, I sat in front of my TV to watch the opening ceremony of the biggest sporting event- the FIFA World Cup. With the skepticism and cynicism from the Western media over the past couple of months, my expectation for the ceremony was not very high.

But my expectations proved me wrong. The opening ceremony of FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 was one of the greatest events I witnessed in the 25 years of my event management experience, or rather, in my lifetime. They managed to make it entertaining

for people around the world, sports fans and non-fans alike while keeping the roots of Arab and Islamic culture. The conversation between Morgan Freeman and Ghanim Al Muftah was a cherry on top of the ceremony.

This intrigued me, and I thought this might be an excellent time to schedule my long pending business trip to Qatar. I will experience the World Cup while also getting my work done. While arranging my trip, I came across some thing new – Hayya (literal meaning: come; in this context: welcome) Card. This was another concept I was

impressed with, making it easier for fans worldwide to enter Qatar without the hassle of a visa.

Once all the arrangement was set, I left for the kempegowda international airport (Bengaluru) in India. Arriving at the airport, it took me 15 minutes to get inside the gate. Check-in 40 minutes, immigration 30 minutes. And then, after another 30 minutes, reach the plane's entrance. Seeing the procedure on a typical day in Bengaluru airport, I wondered how long it would take me in Hamad International Airport during a World Cup.

I remember vividly there were 7,000 flights scheduled to operate to and from Qatar that week. My flight was scheduled to land at 6 AM. I informed my friend, Shan, CEO of Asheghar Digimentors, and he said he would reach the airport by 6:30 AM to pick me up. I almost scoffed, thinking it would be impossible to get out of the airport in this peak time in just half an hour. Once again, Qatar surprised me with its management. From the time my flight landed to when I reached the exit gate; it took me 10 minutes. Everything from immigration to receiving luggage was automated. When I called and said I am out to Shan about this, a resident of Qatar, even he was shocked by the efficiency of the management.

I thought to myself; this is just the beginning. I wonder what other surprises Qatar has kept in store for me. And to put it mildly, I was not disappointed. In a conversation about the World Cup with Shan, I learned he went to watch a match with his wife and 5-year-old daughter. If you have been to other international tournaments, you would know that stadiums are not very family friendly as you find over-excited and drunk fans during the match. That did not seem to be a problem here as alcohol

was banned in stadiums and fans enjoyed it regardless in the stadium, before, during, and after the match.

For the 29 days that World Cup continued, Qatar filled itself with colors and vibrance and stayed alive 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It became a country that never slept. The quality of life in Qatar is something to cherish and praise. Fans enjoyed different Fan Zones, the Fan Festival, Souq Waqif, Corniche, Lusail Boulevard, and Katara, to name a few. With their security and management, the host country ensured the fans and locals didn't face concerns about safety and security. With their inclusivity, they made sure fans from all cultures and parts of the world felt welcome as they displayed players from all countries in West Bay buildings and

While the Western media kept pointing fingers at Qatar and fished for mistakes and negativity in FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 arrangements, Qatar stood resolute. It proved them wrong not with words but with actions and results. The host country disproved all the worries of Western media and showed that one could have fun without alcohol and that a small country could host the biggest sporting event in the world.

made every activity multilingual. With their free metro and shuttle bus service, they made sure traffic was not an issue. With their entertainment activities, they made sure fans and locals did not get bored at any time of the day. And with their perseverance, the host country ensured everyone had fun by simultaneously upholding their Islamic roots.

Amidst all this, I had to remind myself that I was here for a business trip. While the atmosphere screamed enjoyment, the offices functioned as usual. I had multiple meetings for my business deal with a leading company, Asheghar Digimentors, owned by

His Excellency Shiekh Jassim Bin Mohamed Al Thani. The meetings were a success, and even during the sessions, I got a lot of insights into Qatar. Director of Asheghar Digimentors, Mr. Ahmed Adiyotil, who lived in Qatar and among Qataris for the past three to four decades, spoke highly of Qatar's hospitality, involvement in FIFA World Cup, and vision. I also got to witness their hospitality and all other arrangements personally. Of all the global events I have been to as an event management business and spectator in the past 25 years, this has to be the best-managed event. This is coming from someone who has handled global events in corporate, sports, conferences, entertainment, music festivals, fashion, charity, and exhibition sectors. Supreme Committee deserves special appreciation for making this happen and managing it efficiently.

As an event management initiative, my company has been planning to start a cricket premier league in the gulf countries for the South Asian cricket enthusiasts residing in the region. We were in a dilemma about where to start this initiative.

After 18th December 2022, I am no longer in a dilemma. I am going to start this in the country that hosted the best World Cup, Qatar.

Qatar welcomed everyone with their "Hayya," and fans united here as one from every corner of the world. Little did they know that all of their dreams would be fulfilled and they would be the witness to the most incredible World Cup hosted in the history of FIFA.

At Davos Qatar Emir promised to the world – this edition of FIFA world cup will be special one – yes indeed this world cup has been special one and host nation – you are the champion.

M Azizur Rahman: The Innovative Edupreneur from North Bengal





By: Danish Reyaz



The heart-wrenching partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 no doubt created hatred and animosity between Hindus and Muslims, but it hit the Muslims, in particular, hard on many levels. They became rudderless in society as the intelligentsia and the wealthy class from the community migrated to the newly formed Pakistan. Those who were left behind

were mostly poor. Living in the absence of any leadership and amidst an atmosphere of mistrust, they kept lagging further, both educationally and economically.

The Malda district in West Bengal faced a similar fate, with the Muslim population getting into the morass of poverty after partition. But the





situation is, to some extent changing now. There are plenty of good Samaritans who are doing their utmost to change the fate of their community.

One such noble soul is Muhammed Azizur Rahman, who has risen to the occasion. Guided by the belief that there is no service better than education to remove poverty, he has embarked on a mission to ensure the best education for the children of the underprivileged.

He has founded the Tarbiyah Cambridge International School, popularly known as TCIS, in Baranagar (Danga), Jalalpur in Malda district, which has over 50% Muslim population but lacks educational institutions in proportion.

Tarbiyah Cambridge International School (TCIS) is an attempt to

fill the void of modern education in the community in line with the vision of Azizur Rahman, which also puts much emphasis on religious teachings side by side.

“The present school is only the beginning. While it is set to expand to accommodate more students shortly, I have a broader vision to establish TCIS in every district of West Bengal

and, if God’s willing, in neighbouring states,” says Mr. Rahman with quiet determination in his eyes.

Besides being a crusader for education, there is another dimension to his identity, and that is of a successful entrepreneur. Even before he forayed into the education field, he had cemented his position as one of the country’s leading players in the silk industry.

Starling Silk Mills Pvt. Ltd, a company he founded in Jalapur, Malda, is a major silk exporter worldwide. He has provided employment to 50 thousand households and cultivators and many more workers at the factory, improving their economic condition.

Azizur Rahman has turned messiah for people in the poverty-





stricken Malda, as he employs local masses with his company while educating their children in his Tarbiyah Cambridge International School (TCIS) to shape the future of the fledgling new generation.

He also dons the hats of a philanthrope and a social worker. The multi-faceted Azizur Rahman has all the trappings of a true leader for social causes. Here, this cover story brings you an in-depth view of his world, works, and vision.

A Polite and Professional Man

To begin with, Azizur Rahman is a man of respect, and his mere presence is enough to evoke that respect, considering his tireless service to his people and society. His success in his endeavours exalts his position further.

But despite being

successful and having an enviable societal reputation, he doesn't throw any attitude. He often wears a soft smile on his otherwise quiet face. He is polite, respectful to others, and a bit restrained in his talking. Getting him to talk about his endeavours and achievements takes some time.

A man with average height and build, Azizur Rahman, sports a Balbo beard

and loves to be dressed formally in public to preserve his image as a professional man. He says, "I don't like cavalier attitude. For success, one should always be professional in work, words, conduct, or dress."

His Parents, Education, and Early Life

Born to Abdul Jilil and Gulnagar on March 5, 1965, Azizur Rahman had a normal childhood. Although his father was a man of his time when education wasn't a priority in the eyes of parents, he was committed to his children receiving education. Since Azizur Rahman was sharp-minded from a very early age, his father had another potent reason to get him educated.

Reminiscing his





parents' influence, Azizur Rahman says that they were simple human beings who, despite limited means, lived a life full of gratitude towards the Almighty, a virtuous trait he inherited from them.

He says, "My parents cared to bring me up into a better individual by providing good education, rightful guidance, constant support, and inspiration to work hard. Without them, I couldn't have become what I am today."

The love and respect Azizur Rahman have for his parents is evident from the fact that when he started a trust for his educational endeavour, he named it "A J Gulnagar Memorial Trust."

Coming back to his education, Azizur Rahman did his primary education from Madarsa Imdadul Uloom and matriculation from Mohammadia High Madarsah. He passed his intermediate from Malda Town High School with flying colours.

About his graduation he says, "I

wanted to take my father's silk business to the next level, so I chose Commerce and secured a degree from Kolkata University in 1986."

As soon as Azizur Rahman finished his graduation, he joined his father's business, but it was only a formal entry for him. In fact, he had started assisting his father at the age of 12.

A Background to Starling Silk Mills Pvt. Ltd.

As much as the Malda district is known for its delicious Malda mangoes, it is known for silk production. Silk production was introduced in Malda about 300 years ago by the king of Gaur.

With time, more households embraced it, cultivated cocoons, and produced silk so much that it became a hub for raw silk. However, it took the shape of an industry only later.

Azizur Rahman's grandfather set out to produce silk in 1908 with a vision to organize the sector and provide

employment to the local people. Later, Azizur Rahman's father helmed it and expanded it further. He did his utmost with whatever resources and capital were available to him at that time.

But the business took a shape of factory only when Azizur Rahman took over. Azizur Rahman took a loan of 18 thousand from bank and invested it into the business along with a lot of sweat and hard work. He founded Bengal Silk Industries in 1983 and since then there has been no looking back.

Later the Bengal Silk Industries was rechristened as Starling Mills Pvt. Ltd. and registered in 1995.

About Starling Silk Mills Pvt. Ltd

Starling Silk Mills Pvt. Ltd. is an ISO 9001:2000 certified company which has carved its niche amidst cut-throat competition, emerging as India's leading manufacturer and supplier of a wide range of silk and yarn products.



These products are made with hundred percent spun silk and derived from various cocoons such as Muga, Mulberry, Tussah, and Eri. The vast product line includes spun silk fabrics and sarees, silk shirts, silk textile materials, matka silk fabrics and natural silk quit. In terms of spun silk yarn, the company deals in Tassar silk, recycle silk, noil silk, moga silk, carpet silk and silk knitted yarn.

Azizur Rahman says, “Our flawless high-quality products cater to the needs of textile, clothing, interior, medical, and industrial sectors in the country and worldwide.”

Making Starling Silk Mills Pvt. Ltd. a Leading Company

The rise of Starling Silk Mills Pvt. Ltd has all to do with Azizur Rahman’s ceaseless efforts in giving a new dimension to his family business and his desire to go the extra mile to learn new things and implement them well before it is time.

Transforming a family silk business from a cottage unit into a thriving mill and one of India’s leading manufacturers and suppliers of silk products takes a lot of planning and far-sightedness besides hard work.

Azizur Rahman went about in his endeavour pretty meticulously. First, he took a round abroad, observed international mills in Italy and Germany, and imported various modern machinery from there. He hired skilful employees with good backgrounds and experience who were further trained to handle these modern, sophisticated machines.

Azizur Rahman says, “Apart from the state-of-art machinery, our large production capacity, stringent quality, large warehouse, and vast distribution network are the other aspects that have helped us emerge as one of the leaders in the industry.”

That said, like any good business leader, he reserves the highest praise for his team. He says, “Our team has talented weavers, designers, and technicians who are highly driven, dedicated, and hard-working. Without them, this journey wouldn’t have reached this far.”

In its glorious journey, the company has also won several awards, including the Foshmi Award for the year 2003. Ukas Award, and the award from Silk Mark Organization.

All said and done, another salient

factor for its popularity is the company’s ethical practices. Azizur Rahman says, “Ethics is at the core of our business. We never compromise our products for profiteering. Our pricing is competitive. We give just wages to our workers. And our entire process is transparent for others to see.”

From a few dozen, Starling Silk Mills Pvt. Ltd. now has more than 500 employees at the factory, and 50 thousand+ households are engaged in cocoons cultivation and raw silk extraction for the company.

It has scaled up so much that the exports of its products take place to more than 40 countries spanning across the USA, Chili, Europe, Russia, Turkey, Bangladesh, China, Ethiopia, and many other oriental countries, including India.

Starling Silk Mills Pvt. Ltd. also has a factory outlet and showroom in Malda, providing options to customers to visit and choose products according to their requirements.

Foray into Education

The amiable and soft-spoken Azizur Rahman is a man of indomitable spirit and vision. Even after taking Starling



Silk Mills Pvt. Ltd. to new heights and providing massive employment to his people, he didn't want to be content with that. He has an endless appetite for entrepreneurship in a social cause.

"Almighty has been very kind to me. He has given Barkat in my business. So, in gratitude towards him, it becomes my duty to do something for society," says Azizur Rahman.

There is no better service to society than providing education because it is the passport to a bright future. In 2014, Azizur Rahman embarked on a new journey by establishing Tarbiyah Cambridge International School (TCIS).

He glowingly says, "Starting a school was a cherished dream of mine. Much as I had succeeded in the silk business, the day I laid down the school's foundation was the happiest day of my life."

Reasons Behind an English Medium School

The idea of starting an English medium school had begun much before 2014 when Azizur Rahman used to visit foreign countries as part of his business tours.

He says, "I have been travelling abroad since I was 16. I used to get awe-struck by seeing progress made by foreign countries. On every return, I would shed silent tears at the wretched conditions of my fellow countrymen."

According to him, it didn't take him long to realize that the lack of education, more so the lack of modern English education, obstructed the country's progress. He wanted to do something about it. He decided to set up an English medium school in his native town Barangar, Malda, West Bengal. However, the poverty of the local people was something that needed consideration.

Malda is thickly populated, with about 51% Muslims, but the literacy rate here is abysmally low. Most who attend schools often fail to make any headway in life due to the lack of

quality education. The situation is worse among the poor, who comprise the working class in the bidi and plastic industries and migrants and labourers. Their financial condition doesn't allow them to send their children to a school, much less an English medium school.

"An English medium school doesn't seem viable in the area largely inhabited by economically weaker sections. Better you start a regional medium school for them," Azizur Rahman remembers how his friends used to dissuade him from his plan of opening an English medium school.

Nevertheless, Azizur Rahman pushed ahead with his plan because he didn't want to profit unreasonably. He wanted English education for the children coming from poor sections at any cost, so they are not discriminated against and get an equal chance to excel in life like the children of privileged ones in society.

An English Medium School, but With a Difference



While Azizur Rahman was determined to open a school with international education standards that would be accessible to all, especially the poor, he also wanted that school to be different from regular schools.

His vision was for a school that, besides modern education, would equally give importance to moral and ethical education so that students embody worldly success and the ethical practices of life in equal measure.

Driven by that noble desire, when he established the school, he aptly named it Tarbiyah Cambridge International School (TCIS). Tarbiyah is an Arabic word that means nurturing or rearing. In a broader context, it refers to systematically teaching and upbringing children in accordance with Islamic values.

“In today’s world, neither parents give Tarbiyah to their children, nor do the children have time outside school hours to learn about it. I wanted to solve this problem with TCIS, where modern education and Tarbiyah were to be given side by side under one

roof,” says Azizur Rahman.

Establishment and Growth of TCIS

Having done his homework properly, Azizur Rahman, with a determined will, established Tarbiyah Cambridge International School in 2014 adjacent to his Starling Silk Mills Pvt. Ltd in a sprawling six acres of land.

The school started with about 60 students up to class IV, and now it has more than 500 students up to class XII. Since Azizur Rahman’s name carries a lot of credibility in the area, parents don’t think twice about sending their children to his school. Every year the number of students is growing, and so is the school’s expansion.

As the need was felt to create more blocks and classrooms, the second leg of construction work for the school began in 2018, which got disrupted by COVID lockdowns, but it has now resumed on a war footing. “Since the demand is high, we are scaling up our infrastructure. We are set to increase our capacity to 1000 students very soon,” says Azizur Rahman proudly.

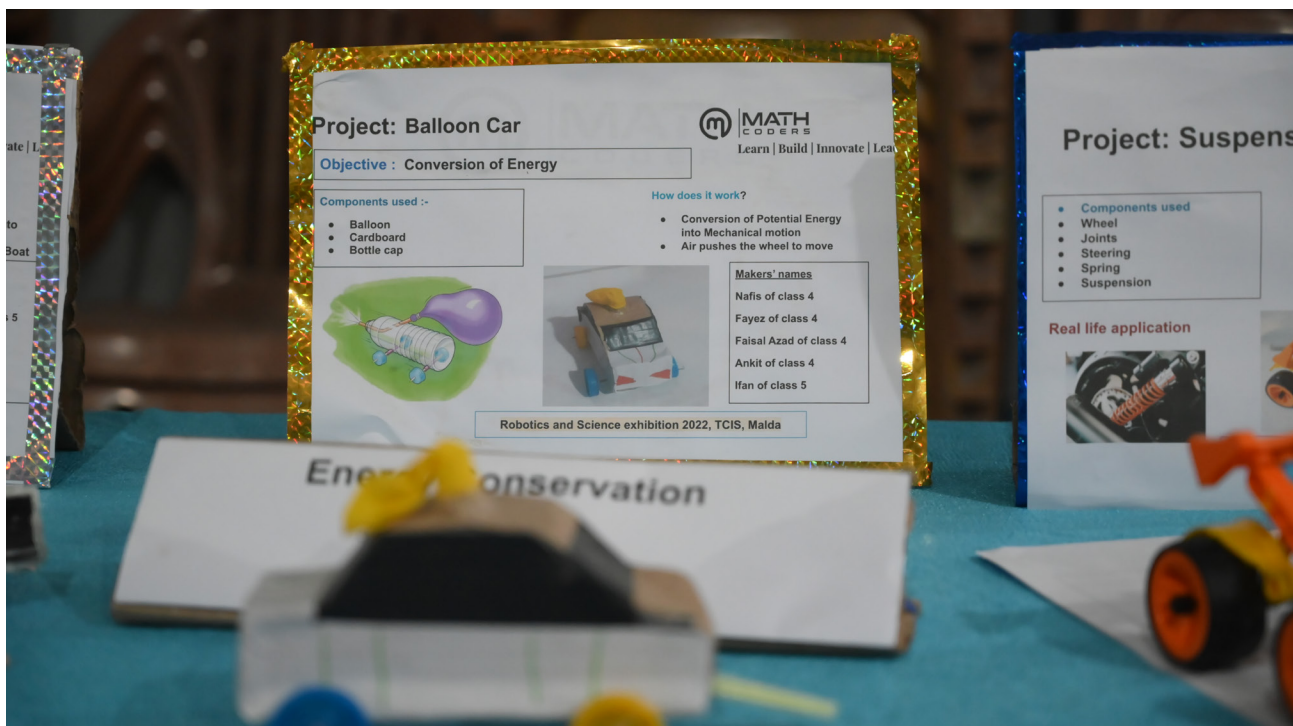
The school has seen exemplary growth in just about nine-year existence. Arguably, the persistent focus on quality by adhering to advance learning trends and techniques since the school’s inception is the reason behind its soaring popularity.

Notable Features of TCIS

Tarbiyah Cambridge International School (TCIS) is a school for the future which is dedicated to shaping the future of its students by providing them with the best education and moulding their personality in the right directions- morally, socially, and physiologically.

Azizur Rahman says, “By inculcating religious discipline, building characters, and helping intellectual growth, we aim at creating students into good human beings who are sensitive to the needs of others, respect fellow humans, and fulfil their duties towards society and the nation at large.”

He adds that the multi-faceted Tarbiyah programme at TCIS includes Tazweed & Understanding of the



Quran and the Hifzul Quran program every Sunday. Furthermore, the school has collaborated with the Markaz Group of Kerala for moral value-based education.

TCSI is affiliated with CBSE and has a balanced student-teacher ratio for effective learning. The teaching staff are highly experienced, well-trained, and competent to unravel the talent of every student and help them build on their strengths to excel.

Azizur Rahman says, “The teachers at our school work as a team and recognize their responsibility. They are not only adept in teaching academic curriculum, but also wield impeccable values essential for inspiring students to pick up best practices in life.

Besides excellent teaching staff, the school is equipped with all the modern facilities such as fully digital classrooms, a well-stocked Library, Assembly Hall, Science Lab, Media Lab, separate boys’ and girls’ hostels.

An ample number of extracurricular

activities, including martial arts, roller skating, cricket, football, tennis, volleyball, etc., add to students’ sporting skills and physical fitness.

To enhance leadership skills, TCIS has introduced 50+ ECC activities like quizzes, debates on contemporary topics, dramas on social issues, instant speeches, tongue twister competitions etc., which are performed publicly on the Annual Day of school.

Apart from that, daily students’ performance reports are being published digitally to monitor them very closely and take action according to the requirement.

Azizur Rahman says, “We have already introduced robotics and coding mathematics. We intend to introduce AI in our classrooms to create smart, responsive content for the personalised care of students.”

The hard work of the team has been bearing fruits consistently. For a recent example, the second batch of 10th standard has excelled in board

exams. Students have obtained 85 to 97 percent marks in the 2022 board exam. In the coming days, more powerful academic performance is expected from the students.

Making TCIS a Brand

Azizur Rahman has a broader vision to spread the education model he envisages for the overall growth of students at a reasonable price.

“The idea is to develop TCIS into a credible brand and branch out into other areas, creating a sort of educational revolution keeping the underprivileged in focus.” Azizur Rahman says, “Our entire team is working very hard to fulfil the dreams of taking English medium education to rural India.”

According to him, the management has the vision to establish up to 200 branches, focusing on rural areas by 2024. Plans are already afoot to open the first 100 branches. We have already started 42 branches at the junior level and one branch up to XII standards.



The main campus is already being developed swiftly to serve as the central branch, controlling and coordinating all other branches spread in the state and elsewhere.

Azizur Rahman says, “Ensuring technology-based quality and modern education in rural India is not only an attempt to take the TCIS brand to the needy sections of the society living the far-flung areas but also a sincere effort on our part to promote the concept of Digital India, which has been developed by the Govt. of India.”

Dream for a University

The sections of society that have been left behind in progress must get a fair chance to advance and acquire leadership roles in society. To that end, universities have a major role to play.

When it comes to West Bengal, the state has a significant minority population, but accordingly, there are not enough minority universities.

Azizur Rahman says, “Universities, in general, are in awful scarcity in our country. While in developed countries, for per 50 thousand population, there is about one university, in India, we don’t have a university even for 10 lakh people.”

Well aware of the situation in his state, Azizur Rahman nurtures a dream to establish a university that will open gates for minorities to excel in higher education. However, establishing a university is no child’s play. It requires enormous funds and infrastructures, as well as resources of other kinds.

Azizur Rahman says, “I have already consulted my industrialist friends who can contribute in this regard. Insha’Allah, taking everybody along, and with government assistance, we will be able to establish a university one day. But for now, our entire focus is to move ahead with TCIS. The university can wait.”

Azizur Rahman’s World View

Besides being an entrepreneur and educationist, Azizur Rahman is a thinker and has the brain of an intellectual. His insights into the history and contemporary world politics are discerning and impressive.

He says the world, including our beloved country India, is going through a tumultuous period where fascist and reactionary forces have dominated and successfully changed the political discourse to that of hate and bigotry. He shows his concerns about the growing trend of Islamophobia around the world.

Nevertheless, Azizur Rahman is hopeful that the time will change and people will get fed up with hate and eventually return to the path of peace, harmony, and brotherhood.

He says, “Education has a big role in healing the world. More than



the present education system, the education tied to moral and ethical values we are advocating will serve the purpose.”

Maeeshat's View

A man of many ideas, unbounded zeal, and tireless hard work, Azizur Rahman has given a new meaning to entrepreneurship and has also shown his mettle in community leadership.

On the one hand, his Starling Silk Mills employs hundreds of people; on the other, TCIS is doing stellar work to educate underprivileged children holistically. And considering the way TCIS expansion is taking place, we can say Azizur Rahman is a leader in the making for bigger things.

For Maeeshat Media, it is always

heartening to see the emergence of new entrepreneurs and community leaders. Azizur Rahman's endeavours are highly praiseworthy, especially because they are geared towards the causes of the disadvantages.

He has dispelled the notion that the poor and downtrodden are indifferent to change their fate through education. According to him, despite poverty, these people are aware of the importance of education. They want their children to be educated, but the community lacks the leadership to tap into their willingness.

He says, “Our community needs more leaders to come forward and shoulder the responsibility of establishing more and more educational institutions. One Tarbiyah Cambridge International

School is not enough.”

Azizur Rahman considers himself a dreamer, even in an adverse situation. Had he not dreamed, nothing would have materialised. But he always backed his dreams with immense hard work and an undying passion for achieving them.

The dedicated crusader is on a constant mission to better the lives of others through meaningful and constructive changes. We have the highest regard for him.

Fittingly, when he signs off, he tells his favourite quote: “Zindagi tab banti hai jab aap khush hote hain. Lekin Zindagi tab behtareen banti hai jab koi aap ki wajah se khush hota hai.”



Dear Sir

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله

As you know that Maeeshat is working to promote entrepreneurship among Minority Community. After lockdown, we are again publishing hard copies of Maeeshat Magazine (English) and sending to your doorstep. Alhamdulillah in every issue we are making a difference. we are publishing cover story on community leader and marketing across the country and abroad. Now we have started subscription drive, I am sure you are receiving our copies.

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Word of the Year: Democracy



By Frank F. Islam



“

After a long and hard-fought campaign, it is now my honor to utter the four most powerful words in a democracy: “The people have spoken.” I have often said that a vote is a prayer for the world we desire for ourselves and our children.

— *Raphael Warnock, victory speech*

...I don't want any of you to stop dreaming. I don't want any of you to stop believing in America. I want you to believe in America, and to continue to believe in the Constitution and believe in our elected officials most of all.

— *Herschel Walker concession speech*

On December 7, WW-II (i.e., the runoff battle between Raphael Warnock (D) and Herschel Walker (R) for the U.S. Senate seat from Georgia) ended with Warnock winning. The other winner was democracy.

The manner in which this election was resolved reaffirmed the choice of democracy as our word of the year for 2022. We had chosen democracy after seeing that Merriam-Webster had selected “gaslighting” as its word for this year.



The Associated Press began its November 28 article on Merriam-Webster's selection as follows,

“Gaslighting” — mind manipulation, grossly misleading, downright deceitful — is Merriam Webster's word of the year.

Lookups for the word on merriam-webster.com increased 1,740% in 2022 over the year before. But something else happened. There wasn't a single event that drove significant spikes in the curiosity, as it usually goes with a chosen word of the year.

The gaslighting was pervasive.

Former president Donald Trump was one of the drivers of that pervasiveness. As a practitioner of gaslighting, he popularized and gave birth to a bevy of conspiracy theorists and nonsense promoters aimed at mind control. Who knows where the gas he blows comes from?

What we do know is that Trump seems to want to replace Arnold Schwarzenegger as The Terminator. In a posting to Truth Social, Trump's social media platform, he stated

“...a massive fraud of this magnitude” should allow “the termination of all rules, regulations, and articles, even those found in the Constitution.”

What Trump really meant with his self-obsessed declaration is that he would like to terminate American democracy as we know it.

Herschel Walker was hand-picked by Trump to be the Republican candidate for Senate in Georgia. Although he didn't say it directly in his dignified concession speech, Walker's reference to the importance of the belief in the

Constitution and election officials was a rejection of Trump's recent constitutional comment and continuous election denialism.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) also spoke indirectly against Trump's comment to terminate the Constitution. With other members of the minority leadership standing behind him, McConnell told reporters on Capitol Hill:

“Anyone seeking the presidency who thinks that

the Constitution could somehow be suspended or not followed, it seems to me would have a very hard time being sworn in as president of the United States.

Democracy has been under siege in the U.S. for some time. Trump, in collaboration with his most cult-like followers, has been a leader of that siege, both during his presidency and since leaving oval office.

The results of this year's midterm elections, with Trump-election denying and/or endorsed candidates losing in many races in swing states and districts throughout the country, indicates that Trump's influence and impact has begun to wane. Because of this and other contributing factors, as we stated in our Thanksgiving blog, “the light of democracy still shines.”

The light of our democracy does still shine. But it flickers rather than being a strong and steady beam. This is

attributable to the fact that we as a citizenry remain divided and more polarized than we were a decade or so ago.

Where we stand depends on where we sit (politically and/or geographically). What we see and hear depends on where we look and whom we listen to (on TV and in the social media).

That's the conclusion that must be drawn, based upon reviewing the results of the most recent Georgetown Institute of Politics and Public Service Battleground Poll (Georgetown Poll or Poll) conducted a few weeks after the midterm elections.

The press release summarizing the Poll's findings states, "...voters feel strongly that the country's democracy is being threatened. While a lack of respect and civility in politics continues to remain an issue for voters, there's not a lot of agreement on why Americans feel this way."

There is a general agreement across party lines that:

- "Democracy is under attack" (75% of all polled respondents)
- "The increasing amount of violent behavior in our society" is an extremely or very serious threat to democracy (77%)
- "The decreasing amount of respect and civility in our political system" is an extremely or very serious threat to democracy (61%)

There is considerable disagreement, though, by voters on other issues "driven by partisanship and where they get their information."

For example, "Voter fraud causing stolen elections" is seen as a serious threat to democracy by: 71% of Republicans, 44% of Independents, and just 29% of Democrats. 70% of Fox News daily viewers, 43% of CNN daily viewers, and only 37% of MSNBC daily viewers.

Other issues on which there was considerable disagreement included;

- Political candidates who refuse to accept valid election results
- 'Woke culture' imposing out-of-touch liberal values on us all
- Voter suppression and intimidation

The Georgetown Poll findings on these issues is not surprising and tend to cast the possibility of building a stronger democracy in the future into the shadows.

The Poll provides several glimmers of light, however, including:

- More than 8 in 10 Americans valuing "compromise,

respect and civility"

- A clear preference for leaders who will compromise (68%)
- "It is never justified to use violence to advance a political or public policy goal" (90%)

Those glimmers and positive perspectives shared by the majority of we, the people, provide the potential for citizens uniting across personal, political, and geographic lines. This is essential for developing a "common good" platform for enhancing our American democracy moving forward.

The need for such a platform continues to grow in these polarized times due to numerous factors. Two of the primary ones are:

- The emerging supremacy of states' rights and policies in our governmental system.
- The Supreme Court's emerging role as the dominant branch at the federal level.

We have commented on the significance of states' rights in several blogs this year, including: "The Island States of America," posted in January, and "Is Our American Democracy Unfurling or Unraveling?" posted in October.

In his recent book, Laboratories Against Democracy: How National Parties Transformed State Policies (July, 2022), political scientist Jacob Grumbach uses a State Democracy Index (Index) he developed to compare policies across states on measures such as gerrymandering and ease of voting in the 21st century.

Grumbach's analysis using his Index reveals that there was hardly any difference between the states in 2000, but by 2018 Republican-controlled states had fallen sharply on the Index to become more conservative, while Democratic and politically-divided states had become slightly more progressive.

If that was the case for the national condition of our American democracy in 2018, given the Republican states' rewriting of laws to make them more restrictive after the 2020 national elections, it can be assumed that a current application of the Index would disclose an even greater separation between these "laboratories" And now the Supreme Court might add insult to injury in terms of increasing the threat to our American democracy.

On December 7, the Supreme Court heard arguments in the North Carolina case of *Moore v. Harper*. This case was brought based upon the "independent state legislature theory," which asserts that legislatures are the ultimate — and can be the exclusive — decision-makers in election-related activities.

In a *New York Times* guest essay on December 5, North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper (D) asserts that “If the court endorses this doctrine, it would give state legislatures sole power over voting laws, congressional redistricting, and potentially even the selection of presidential electors and the proper certification of election winners.” Cooper adds, “This view would leave no room for oversight by state courts and put the ability of governors to veto election-related legislation in doubt.”

Robert Reich, in his December 8 *Substack* article on this case, points out, “...Brett Kavanaugh, Samuel Alito, Clarence Thomas, and Neil Gorsuch have all endorsed aspects of the theory. Notably, they didn’t disavow it in yesterday’s oral argument.”

In his column, Reich comments that even if the Supreme Court supports the independent state legislature doctrine in its decision, part of its impact could be eliminated by the Electoral Reform Act currently before the Congress. If that Act is passed, it would prevent the state legislatures from being able to appoint the electors for anyone other than the person who won the popular vote.

Time will tell whether that is possible in this lame duck session of Congress. If it is not, the Electoral Reform Act will die by the wayside and our democracy will be diminished even further.

Even if it is diminished, however, it will not be destroyed because of what America is and who we are as Americans. Fareed Zakaria and George Packer provide useful frames of reference on this.

Near the end of his December 2 *Washington Post* article titled, “Let’s Talk About America’s Strengths,” Zakaria writes,

“They (The Founding Fathers) had failures in their first effort, the Articles of Confederation collapsed. In the end, however they concocted something stunning: a system that protected individual rights; allowed for regular changes in leadership, prevented religious hegemony, and created a structure flexible enough to adapt to massive changes.”

He goes on to observe in his concluding paragraph:

“Democracy is fragile in its own way, but this is a good moment to consider its strengths. This abstract idea of government largely created by the United States,

borrowed over the years by countless other nations, refined and improved in various ways, has spread across the world in countries, rich and poor, European, Asian, Latin American and African. It has stood the test of time for two and a half centuries... Winston Churchill has surely been vindicated in his belief that democracy is the worst form of government — except for all others.”

George Packer is a bit more equivocal, but still inspiring in his December article for *The Atlantic*, titled “America Can Still Lead.” In his concluding paragraph, he writes:

“Something similar (to Ukrainian nationhood) is true here in the U.S. Our national identity has always been rooted in democracy. Nothing else, not blood and soil, shared enthusiasm, common memories, or moneyed pursuits has ever really held America together — only what Walt Whitman called “the fervid and tremendous idea.” It’s as fragile as it is compelling and when it fails, we dissolve into hateful little tribes, and autocrats here and abroad smile and rub their hands. Don’t imagine that America can bring the light of freedom to the world but don’t think the world will be better off if we just stop trying.”

Packer nails it. We Americans must not stop trying to bring the light of freedom to the world.

We must also ensure that light shines fairly and equally upon all in our own democracy. It cannot be a candle in the wind nor simply a shining city on a hill. It must be a light that glows in multi-hued colors, reflecting who we are as a people and charting the path forward to a more perfect union.

That glowing light of truth in the American way can help extinguish the falsehoods of gaslighting. This is the challenge and opportunity and why democracy is our word of the year for 2022.

“I believe that democracy is the political enactment of a spiritual idea. The notion that each of us has within us a spark of the divine... We all have value. And, if we have value, we ought to have a voice

— *Raphael Warnock*

Syed Manzar: The Man Behind Digital Revival of Urdu



By: Tanwirul Hasan



Urdu is mostly written in Naskh font based on Arabic and Nastaliq font based on Perso-Arabic. Naskh has been on machines for a long time, even before the computer became ubiquitous. For example, typewriters used to have various forms of Naskh in the past.

Urdu is a language that is distinctly elegant and decorous. A whopping 200 million people speak Urdu, the world's 11th most widely spoken language. Majorly spoken in India and Pakistan, Urdu, with time, has also travelled to Western Asia, Europe, America, and elsewhere in the world through the Urdu-speaking diaspora, widening its popularity and landscape.

With the advent of the computer and internet technology, Urdu has been popularised further, but not to the extent of English and other major languages, primarily due to the limitation in its typeface.

Naskh is simple and easy to code, but it has one limitation. It is not very easy to read online for average Urdu-speaking people. So, when the Perso-Arabic-based Nastaliq came into use in digital form, it solved the problem to a great extent.

Even the printing and publication industries, which have already been heavily digitalised and have computer technology at the centre of all their activities, have benefitted greatly from Nastaliq's digital incarnation.

Nastaliq is easy to read and ornate in styling, making it suitable for online designing and calligraphy. Even with



the mechanical rendering, Nastaliq provides the same sweep and flourish as traditional handwritten calligraphy. Resultantly, Urdu has a new lease on life and regained its sheen in the digital space.

In India, to that end, a man has been tirelessly doing his utmost to invigorate Urdu and preserve its aesthetics. He is Mumbai-based Syed Manzar, the founder and Managing Director of Axis SoftMedia Inc. (Centre for Research in Digital Calligraphy-Perso-Arabic), a font-developing research lab based in Mumbai.

A Loving Crusader for Urdu

Syed Manzar is soft-natured and has a calm demeanour. But beneath his calmness, he has a burning desire to ensure Urdu has its rightful place so far as its digitalisation is concerned vis-à-vis other top languages of the world.

An MCA and a product of Urdu Medium School, Syed Manzar fondly says, “I have been in love with Urdu since childhood. Its exquisiteness, fragrance, and candour appeal to me

so much.” He further adds, “Urdu, however, has lagged behind other Indo-Aryan languages in terms of getting on the technology bandwagon. Digitalising it, I am only playing a small part in redeeming its past glory.”

Syed Manzar, with years of skills and expertise behind him, has developed a wide range of fonts, Ali Nastaliq, Faiz Nastaliq, and Arif Nastaliq being prominent among them, which have revolutionised the typography of Urdu. Syed Manzar hasn’t, however, given up on Naskh altogether. The Manzar Quranic Naskh is as much popular as his other fonts are.

Syed Manzar says, “Axis SoftMedia’s journey began in 1992 to cater to the needs of the Perso-Arabic publishing market and computing world. The company so far has developed scores of fonts, becoming the first digital software company in the subcontinent to do so.”

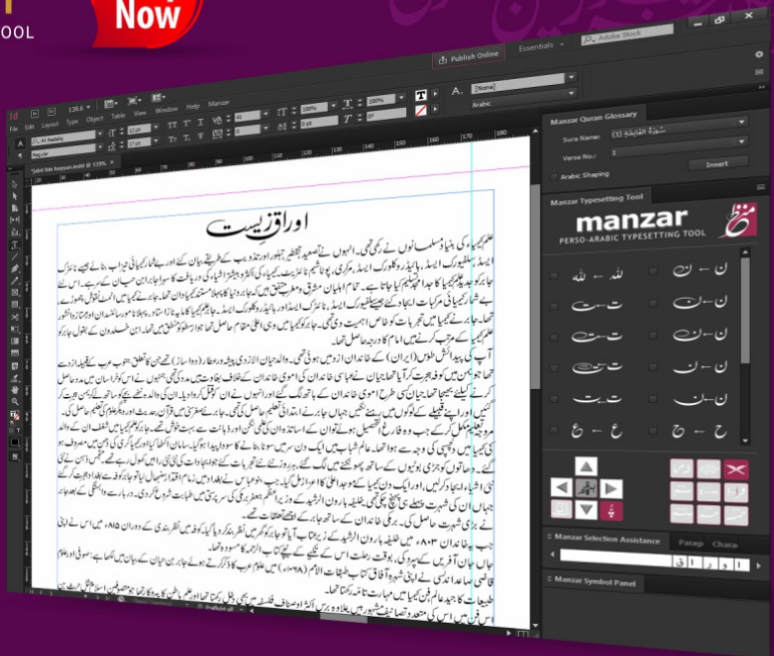
He adds that they also create customized fonts. Several Urdu newspapers in Pakistan and India, including the famous Jung, Inquilab,

and Sahafat, use their customized fonts. In visual media, his trusted clients include News 18 Urdu, DD Urdu, ETV Urdu, Munsif TV, Sahara TV, etc.

Axis SoftMedia has also worked with hundreds of advertising and design agencies, translation agencies, and clients, providing them with tools to take their message in Urdu to a broader audience more stylishly and presentably.

He says, “For the proliferation of Urdu on the internet, we have our fonts available online to download. They are both aesthetic and technologically compatible with most social sites and webpages so that internet users can easily communicate and create content in their beloved language.”

Syed Manzar has spent a long time working for InPage, the world’s leading Urdu software dedicated to Urdu Pagemaking, where he created most of the fonts while adding to its richness. However, in 2012 he parted ways with the InPage team and started fully concentrating on Axis



SoftMedia. Ever since, the company has launched product after product that, competition-wise, provides a significant edge and differentiation to its clients.

Manzar Perso-Arabic Typesetting Tool

The latest product that Syed Manzar has come up with is the Manzar Perso-Arabic Typesetting Tool. This comprehensive typographic plugin works with Adobe InDesign, a popular desktop publishing and layout application, on both Windows and Mac platforms.

Syed Manzar says, “Manzar Perso-Arabic Typesetting Tool is a long-awaited breakthrough in Urdu typesetting. There are several benefits of using Manzar. It allows users the creative freedom and richness of typography, improves precision, and

saves time.”

Game-Changing Features

The new tool brings a plethora of features that the publishing industry has been going without for a long time. It lets the users select and reposition each letter and even the tiniest components like Nukta and Aerab as per their requirements while complemented with the spacing feature that intuitively creates proportionate space between the characters and words.

While the users can also track/kern every word and every ligature and reposition it, the Kasheeda (Justification) panel allows users to choose between long Kasheeda and short Kasheeda for the alignment of the text, which is achieved by lengthening or shortening words in the case of Perso-Arabic script. The panel not only justifies the text but

also enhances its elegant appearance. In addition, the test carving feature with twenty calligraphic styles to choose from beautifies each character and word.

Besides the embellishment features, Manzar Typesetting Tool has a few other top features as well, making it quite versatile. One important feature is the in-built dynamic Spell-checker with more than 2.5 lakh Urdu words in store. And better still, the transliteration feature can transliterate from Urdu to Hindi and vice-versa, as well as from Urdu Roman to Urdu and vice-versa in a flash.

Nevertheless, Syed Manzar says, “The salient feature that makes the Manzar stand among other tools out is its capability in composition and layout of the Quran.” And what he says is right.

Manzar Perso-Arabic Typesetting

Tool is unmatched for its high extent of calligraphic nuances. The entire Indo-Pak Quranic text is integrated into the plugin, allowing users options to select complete Quranic text or single or several Aayats from the Quran Glossary panel.

When composing the Quranic text, recitation symbols like the Aayat circle, Ruku, and other recitation symbols play a significant role. To that end, Manzar is well-equipped with these essential symbols in the Symbol Panel, while it also provides an extensive collection of beautiful borders and Arab-oriented Cliparts.

“In the lack of advanced technology, Quran composition was challenging, considering one had to involve an expert calligrapher, which added to the cost. But not anymore. Manzar Typesetting Tool effectively and cheaply solves this problem as a one-stop solution,” says Syed Manzar.

Reviving Languages

Besides toiling away in developing Urdu fonts, Syed Manzar also works in the language field. Through his efforts, Nawayati, a small community language in Bhatkal, which was in the throes of death, has now been revived. He developed their script from the ground up and digitalised all the fonts.

“Today, the community has been able to publish their books, newspapers, and magazines both offline and online,” says Syed Manzar with a palpable pride in his voice. He also says a few other languages are on his radar to protect them from extinction.

Outlook on the Future of Urdu

Syed Manzar also has an intellectual perspective on the future of the Urdu. He doesn't agree to the gloomy forecast that critics often predict Urdu might die in the longer run. According to him, Urdu despite the apathy of

government is here to stay and will continue to thrive.

He says, “As long as there are madrasas and books are being printed, Urdu will be alive. We also must not forget beyond the Indian frontier Urdu is the official language and lingua franca of Pakistan. So, it will not disappear, at least in that country.”

Syed Manzar also hints at recent positive developments in favour of Urdu. Social media's emergence has increased Urdu's attraction among other communities. The new practice of writing Urdu, particularly Shayaris



in Devanagari and Roman script, also assures the longevity of this mellifluous language.

Awards and Recognitions

For a man so diligently involved in the service of Urdu, it was only a matter of time before his efforts were noticed to bring him laurels. And deservedly, Syed Manzar has received many awards over the years as a testament to his yeoman's service for digitally popularising Urdu.

He has many prestigious awards

to his honour, including the Fakhre-Urdu award by Urdu Caravan Mumbai, Outstanding Innovation Award by Maeshat Media, Mumbai, Digital Calligraphy Award by Unique Educational Society, Pune as well as Muhammed Ali Johar Urdu Computing Award by Abu Huraira Model School Society, Firozabad.

For his eminent work in digital Quranic calligraphy, he has also received NABA Award from NABA Quran Academy, Mumbai. Pashban-e-fun, an organisation of artists, calligraphers, and painters in Mumbai, and Bhindibazar.com, a literary forum, have also felicitated Syed Manzar for his efforts to promote Urdu by developing versatile Urdu fonts and user-friendly calligraphic technology.

Wrap Up

Syed Manzar has put his MCA background to optimum use by doing what he loves the most: churning out fonts and tools to increase the footprint of Urdu in the digital world.

The innovations he has brought in with his versions of Nastaliq fonts have allowed much-needed leeway for users from printing and publication backgrounds to adapt to the newer styles and techniques in Urdu calligraphy and designing.

At the same time, The Mazar Typesetting Tool he has created is a perfect plugin for typesetters to have everything in one place, helping them cut back on time and expenses while providing an output with high finesse and precision.

It is no exaggeration to say that Syed Manzar has transformed the Urdu typography landscape in a big way. It will only keep getting better with his prolific creativity and technological prowess in the future.

Sania Mirza, the country's first Muslim female fighter pilot

Sania Mirza, whose childhood ambition finally came true, is the ideal example of “hard work always pays off.” The daughter of a TV mechanic from Mirzapur will join the Indian Air Force as the first Muslim female fighter pilot in the nation.



She has made it possible for her to fulfill her ambition of becoming a fighter pilot by earning the 149th position in the National Defense Academy (NDA) exam. However, this is not her first effort to pass the exam.

In an interview, she revealed that she failed to grab a seat in the first attempt because there were only two women-reserved seats reserved in the fighter pilot wing. She added that despite stiff competition, she managed to grab a seat in her second attempt.

Sania is a resident of the little village of Jasovar, which is close to the Dehat Kotwali police station. She got her 10th class diploma at Pandit Chintamani Dubey Inter College. Later, she attended Mirzapur's Guru Nanak Girls

Inter College, where she got her 12th-grade diploma and became the district topper.

She further emphasized that it is incorrect that only applicants with strong English communication abilities are chosen for this prestigious league. She highlighted the fact that she went to a Hindi-medium school. Additionally, she claimed that motivated Hindi-medium students might also achieve success.

According to Sania, she has always aspired to be a fighter pilot, and her inspiration is the first female pilot, Avni Chaturvedi.

She will assemble with NDA Khadakwasla on December 27 in Pune.

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Kashmiri woman starts frozen food venture, becomes inspiration for others

The youth of Kashmir Valley now believe in self-employment. A good number of females have left a unique mark by breaking all the taboos.

Srinagar, Dec 21, 2022: The youth of Kashmir Valley now believe in self-employment. A good number of females have left a unique mark by breaking all the taboos.

A good example of this can be taken from Kashmir's Dr. Rukhsar Saeed, who started her own business after completing her PhD in Food Technology and emerged as the first woman from the Kashmir Valley to start a frozen food venture. Today Dr. Rukhsar is not only earning herself but also is providing employment to many other women.

This achievement of Dr. Rukhsar is also important because after marriage she nurtured her hobby along with raising her two children. Dr. Rukhsar says that her in-laws helped her in every possible way.

This venture called 'Khalis' was started by Dr. Rukhsar in 2019. "Pure Food" offers a wide range of frozen chicken products, ready to fry / bake. Each product is carefully manufactured using quality ingredients, she says.

According to Dr. Rukhsar, the idea came to her while raising her two children when she felt the need for food that was easy to prepare and of good quality.

"I came up with the name 'Khalis' because I wanted to

make my food pure, food that is easily available and doesn't compromise on quality and taste," she said.

Talking to IANS, Dr. Rukhsar said, "Starting a small food

business at home after obtaining a doctorate in food technology has always been my dream. I was always surprised by the concept and preservation of frozen food. I tried to prepare such frozen snacks in which the freshness and taste could be maintained and with God's grace I succeeded in this.

"After a lot of hard work and effort I have made them easily available for the foodies while retaining the freshness and taste without compromising on quality. The aim was to provide easy to cook and ready to eat halal snacks."

This venture of Dr. Rukhsar is getting a lot of popularity among the public. "Khalis" products are also available at many departmental stores in Srinagar district while they are also available online. Rukhsar has emerged as an inspiration for other girls in the Kashmir valley.





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Billionaires in Africa, Maha tycoons follow father, feed thousands in hometown



Billionaires in Africa, Maha tycoons follow father, feed thousands in hometown

YAVATMAL : Decades ago, a humble Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) district driver Abdul Narsinghani had a strange habit before going off to work.

Every morning he would instruct his wife Fatima to pack a few 'rotis', he put them in his pocket and at various stops of his ST bus en route, would distribute them among a few poor people he encountered.

His young kids — sons Aman, Aslam and daughter Farida — closely watched all this but often wondered at their father's undue concern for others

when they themselves eked out a bare existence in a 200 square feet slum tenement in Yavatmal.

Years later, Aman, 45, and Aslam, 43 are successful business magnates in Congo, (formerly Zaire), Africa, and Farida I. Budhwani is a housewife in Mumbai, but now they warmly cherish their simple father's small acts of charity for fellow beings.

"We brothers completed our high secondary school (Class XII) and got jobs in Uganda, so we went there in 1998. In just three years (2000), we got an offer to start a pharmaceutical

business in the adjoining country, Congo, and we grabbed the opportunity," Aman told IANS.

That was the turning point for the Narsinghani brothers, and they became the first Indians to start a business in Congo, and their venture is named Sara Pharmaceuticals.

"Many Africans have a fetish to pop in medicines for everything... We imported various types of medicines from India or China and then sold them there... Slowly, that tiny business has grown into a pharma-cum-electronics empire with a turnover of over Rs

1,200 crore per annum,” said Aman.

On their frequent trips back home from Africa, they never forgot their father’s daily habit of donating ‘rotis’ or his wise advice – ‘Let nobody go empty handed from my door’ – and decided to do something to take it forward.

“From 2009, we have launched a community kitchen that feeds around 750 people for lunch and some 250 for dinner daily... 98 per cent of the beneficiaries are the local poor people, irrespective of religion or status, all are equally welcome...” said Aman.

The daily offering through ‘Khidmat-E-Khalk’ (Selfless Service) is either good quality rice-vegetables, lip-smacking vegetable or chicken biryanis and other foodstuff as the people may desire, and distributed at a couple of locations in Yavatmal, 365 days a year.

It was during the Covid-19 pandemic (2020-2021) lockdown that the small kitchen proved its true worth and utility for lakhs of deprived people, especially the migrant folks stranded far from home.

“In the first six months of the stringent lockdown, we fed over 1.50 crore people. We also distributed food-kits of around 25 kg rations worth Rs 2 crore to the helpless people who had lost their jobs,” said Aslam.

After the lockdown eased a bit from October 2020 onwards, the Narsinghani brothers shifted their attention to the local Shri Vasantrao Naik Government Medical College & Hospital, where they served free food to all the patients for over one year.

As the pharma business of the siblings

Narsinghani, who gave his children an invaluable lesson to care for fellow humans, witnessed everything with joy and pride. He passed away peacefully in 2015, while his widow Fatima, 71, continues to guide and support her two sons in all their ventures.

Doing business in Africa is not everybody’s cup tea, given the political turmoil in many countries there, plus the social, cultural and language barriers, but the Narsinghani brothers managed to learn Swahili in just a couple of years and were accepted with open arms in Uganda, Congo and other countries in Central African region.

“Though we have seen a lot of social-cultural-political upheavals there in the past 25 years, but luckily, the Indian community there does not face problems from any quarter and we are probably treated as ‘more than equals’ among the rest,” Aman smiled.

The pharma business has gradually expanded within Africa, and lately the duo diversified into electronics trading which is picking up hugely through their

several retail outlets.

“The Almighty has been magnanimous and benevolent to us and coupled with what our parents bequeathed us, we are trying in our own little way, to repay all the blessings,” acknowledge the Narsinghanis. — IANS



flourished in Central Africa, the duo also progressed, upgrading from their humble 200-sq.ft. slum abode to a palatial 10,000 sq.ft mansion in Yavatmal, where they rank among the most esteemed citizens.

The devout Khoja Muslim, Abdul

YouTube creators contributed over Rs 10,000 cr to India's GDP in 2021

YouTube's creative ecosystem contributed over Rs 10,000 crore to the Indian GDP and supported more than 750,000 full-time equivalent jobs in the country in 2021, the Google-owned company said on Monday.



New Delhi, Dec 19, 2022: YouTube's creative ecosystem contributed over Rs 10,000 crore to the Indian GDP and supported more than 750,000 full-time equivalent jobs in the country in 2021, the Google-owned company said on Monday.

The company also announced that Courses, a new product to bring a richer learning experience for viewers and a new way to monetise for creators, would begin rolling out in beta in 2023.

"We are delighted that YouTube's creative ecosystem continues to power India's creator economy, supporting new jobs and opportunities across the length and breadth of the country," said Ajay Vidyasagar, Director-South, SouthEast Asia and APAC Emerging Markets, YouTube.

Today, billions of people consume the content powered by YouTube creators in India the world over, according to the findings of the latest Oxford Economics study by YouTube.

This has helped creators unlock monetisation opportunities, allowing many to convert their passions into sustainable careers.

"We continue investing in ways to enable our viewers to learn valuable skills and gain access to knowledge that helps them achieve their potential and follow their dreams," said Ishan John Chatterjee, Director, India, YouTube.

YouTube announced that it would expand efforts to work with more healthcare institutions — including Narayana, Manipal, Medanta, and Shalby — to create and amplify

credible content, covering more than 100 medical conditions, across Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Gujarati, Bengali and English.

The company said it will also support partners to achieve scale and efficiency in creating multilingual content.

Next year, qualified creators in India can begin offering free or paid Courses to provide in-depth, structured learning experiences for viewers. Courses will not only support richer learning experiences for audiences but also offer creators a new monetisation option.

LearnoHub, Speak English With Aishwarya, and Telusko, among others, will develop courses across academic and vocational subjects in various Indian languages in the beta phase, said YouTube.

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Muneeza Jilani:

Former govt servant turned entrepreneur

By: Tabasum Aziz

There are many women in the Kashmir Valley who have made a name for themselves as successful entrepreneurs, but women like Muneeza are rarely seen, who turn their passion and interest into business and succeed in making a distinct career for themselves. That too by giving up a government job.

Srinagar, Dec 10,2022: There are many women in the Kashmir Valley who have made a name for themselves as successful entrepreneurs, but women like Muneeza are rarely seen, who turn their passion and interest into business and succeed in making a distinct career for themselves. That too by giving up a government job.

Yes, Muneeza, who gave up a government job, and decided to develop her passion for making beauty products from natural ingredients under the name “Zian Organics”. Oils, lotions, soaps, shampoos and other types of cosmetic products manufactured by her are not common as are prepared from pure herbs without any chemicals.

Muneeza Jilani, a native of Srinagar’s Lal Bazar area, holds a Masters in Computer Science and started her own business in 2018 with her focus on “health for everyone”.

Muneeza started her business with just one skin product, but due to the increasing demand, today she manufactures more than 40 organic cosmetic products for skin and hair from her home under the name “Zian Organics”. It was not easy for Muneeza to start such a business, but with his self-confidence and enthusiasm, he won the support of his family. While in order to further refine her skills and gain complete expertise, she also regularly attended training courses to develop organic cosmetic products.

Muneeza says all these herbal products are made with no chemicals or artificial colours, and natural herbs like saffron, lavender, sandalwood, honey, apricots, almonds, walnuts, Kalnoji, special types of turmeric, pomegranate,

olives and coconuts are used in it.

The female entrepreneur, who currently manufactures all these cosmetic items from her own home with the help of a few women, wants to set up a factory to expand her business so that not only more organic cosmetic beauty products can be produced but also more people can be employed.

She says that social media is an important tool for marketing, thanks to which not only can one’s products be known to more people but also orders can be obtained.

The women of Kashmir valley are not only shining the name of the country but are also showing their ability and potential in other fields including education, health,

art, literature, business, art and technology.

Now, women here are emerging as successful entrepreneurs, which was once considered a profession for men only. Muneeza seems to be quite happy and satisfied with her work. However, she wants parents to support their girls so that they too can fulfill their dreams according to their interest as there is no lack of talent and ability among the girls here and Kashmiri girls have proved it time and time again.

Success can be achieved in any work with dedication, courage and determination. In such a situation, Muneeza Jilani has not only made her mark as a successful women entrepreneur, but she is also becoming a torch-bearer for others.



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Will Caste-Based Census Benefit Pasmanda Muslims in Bihar?

By: Syed Ali Mujtaba

It remains to be seen whether the proposed census has favourable implications for the deprived sections of the society, or will it be yet another political engineering to manufacture different entity boxes suitable for the vote-bank politics in vogue.

THE Pasmanda Muslims of Bihar may have something to talk about after Chief Minister Nitish Kumar ordered a caste-based census in the state. However, they are unsure of what it would eventually mean to them.

The term ‘Pasmanda’, derived from Urdu/Persian, refers to the most oppressed, the most marginalised, and the most socially and economically isolated Muslims in India.

Pasmanda Muslims, an attractive vote bank, comprise more than 85 per cent of the entire Muslim population in India. In Bihar, of the around 17 per cent Muslim population, 80 per cent belong to this category.

The Pasmanda Muslims, other backward classes, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes have long been demanding a census to know their electoral strength and their real socioeconomic position. Despite their vociferous demands, the caste-based nose-count has been denied to them on one pretext or the other.

It remains to be seen whether the proposed census has favourable implications for the deprived sections of the society, or will it be yet another political engineering to manufacture different entity boxes suitable for the vote-bank politics in vogue. The exercise assumes significance as Congress has left the state’s political center stage.

Initially, the BJP supported the idea of a caste census but the Narendra Modi government officially objected to its implementation in the Supreme Court. In September 2021, the Centre argued that a caste census was “administratively” not feasible, and that the judiciary could not direct the government to implement it as having a caste count was strictly in the ambit of the executive.

Later, the Union government decided to have 10% reservation for the economically weaker sections (EWS)

among upper caste Hindus and that opened up a Pandora’s Box. The recent Supreme Court judgement upholding the EWS reservation breached the 50% quota limit earlier set by the apex court in various other judgments.

The Supreme Court had closed the ceiling on the reservation to the 52% of the OBC population saying they may get only a 27% quota. Later, the same court broke the ceiling by upholding the 10% EWS quota to not even 5 per cent of the population. This has given an opportunity to the really deprived sections of society to renew the demand for a caste-based census.



When Nitish Kumar initiated caste census, he categorically stated that his government’s intention was to get a proper estimate of the poverty level of different communities. This, he said, would help the government

“in deciding what can be done for them and their localities.”

The caste-based census would not only help governments to rejig their social justice plank but also broaden the scope of development goals. Moreover, it will eventually lead to greater participation of under-represented and unrepresented caste groups in mainstream economics and politics.

However, the caste-based census has started a complicated debate that whether such a move would get rid of a single-caste party, or it was a genuine step towards giving advantage to marginalized groups.

It remains to be seen what kind of real social justice will emerge from the caste-based census in Bihar. Will it be an affirmation of the political realisation of Dalit leader Kanshi Ram’s famous slogan; “Jiski jitni Sankhya bhari, utni uski hissedari...” The greater a community’s numbers, the greater its political representation... Or will it be something else? It remains a matter of conjecture.



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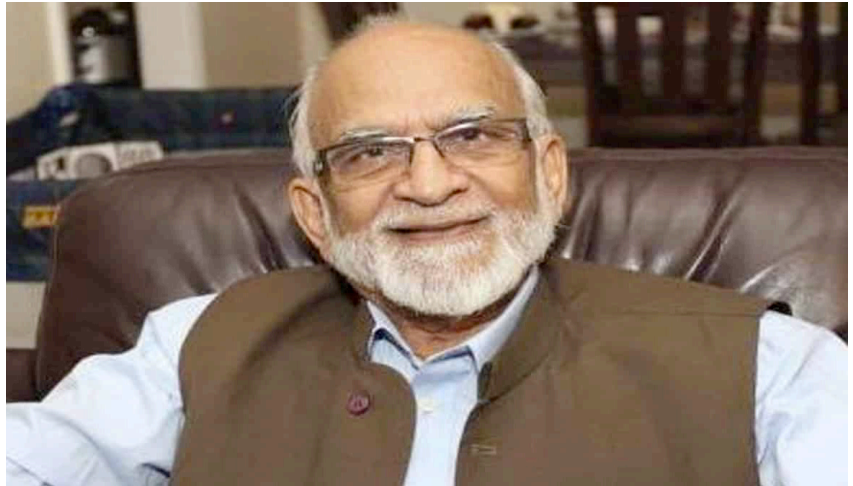
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Dr Muhammad Nejatullah Siddiqui

The Father of Modern Islamic Banking



By: Dr Aslam Abdullah



MILLIONS of people around the world benefit from interest-free banking. But, not many know that the scholar who made it possible within the context of the modern economic system left for his final abode on November 11 in San Jose, some 8,000 miles away from a small village in Northern India where he was born in Gorakhpur in 1931.

Dr. Muhammad Nejatullah Siddiqui left a legacy that will continue to help countless access interest-free loans to achieve their dreams. Nejat means salvation. Dr. Nejatullah's work proved salvation to people who could not advance their financial growth in the highly competitive world due to a lack of capital. Who would have thought that growing up in colonial India, Dr. Nejat would surpass the peak of academic excellence and achieve professorship in two of the world's most prestigious universities, the Muslim University of Aligarh and Kind Abdul Aziz University, Saudi Arabia. Indeed, education in British India was reluctant to open the door for an aspiring Muslim student to help

develop the Islamic Development Bank, which has financed thousands of development projects worldwide.

But he did it with dedication, commitment, and desire to translate concepts into concrete programs to benefit people. He labored hard to author 63 significant books, hundreds of articles, and thousands of lectures worldwide while pioneering economics based on divine principles of justice and equity.

His most widely read book is "Banking without interest," published in more than 30 editions between 1973 and 2022. His other works in English include Recent Theories of Profit: A Critical Examination (1971); Economic Enterprise in Islam (1972); Muslim Economic Thinking (1981); Banking Without Interest (1983); Issues in Islamic banking: selected papers (1983); Partnership and profit-sharing in Islamic law (1985); Insurance in an Islamic Economy (1985); Teaching Economics in Islamic Perspective (1996); Role of State in Islamic Economy (1996);

Dialogue in Islamic Economics (2002) and Islam's View on Property (1969). He received two major awards for his work: King Faisal International Prize for service to Islamic Studies and Shah Waliullah Award for his contribution to Islamic Economics.

Describing the future of Islamic Economics, he wrote in 2013 that the changing world would call for five strategic changes in approach: Family rather than the market as the starting point in economic analysis; Cooperation playing a more significant role in the economy, complementing competition; Debts playing a subsidiary rather than the dominant role in financial markets; Interest and interest-bearing instruments playing no part in money creation and monetary management; and, lastly, Maqasid based thinking supplanting analogical reasoning in Islamic economic jurisprudence. In what follows, I'd like to discuss these points to help you get in touch with these challenging propositions.

He wrote about his involvement in Islamic economics.

"I have been involved in Islamic economics most of my life. At school, however, I studied science subjects but switched to economics, Arabic, and English literature for my BA degree at Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), which I joined in 1949. My reading habit influenced my decision. I was devoted to al-Hilal and al-Balagh magazines, published under Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888–1958), poet, critic, thinker, and one of the great leaders of the Independence Movement. I also read al-Tableegh and was influenced by the Deobandi

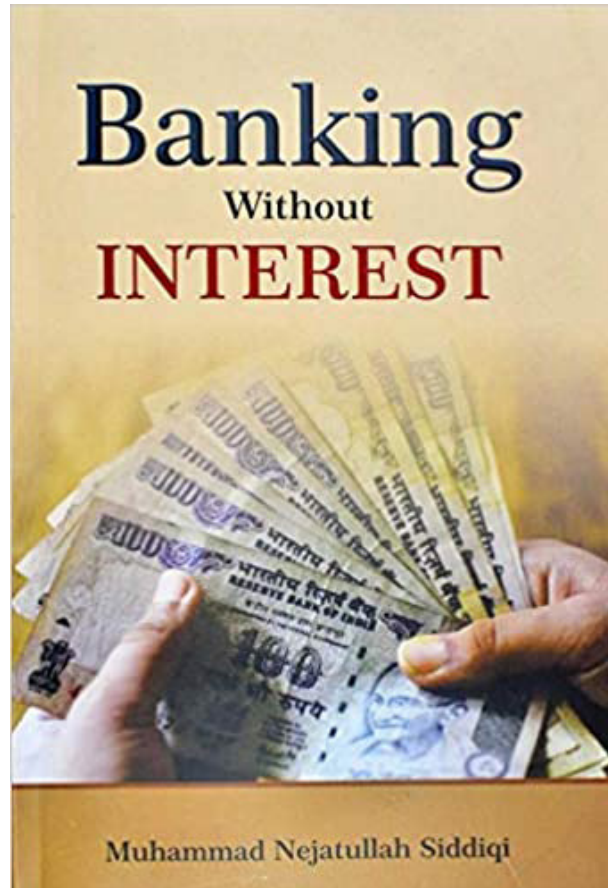
scholar Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi (1863–1943), the author of the famous book on belief and correct conduct (for women), Heavenly Ornaments. And as most young people of my age and time, I studied the works of Maulana Abul Ala Maududi (1903–1979). Two

e Islami, Rampur, and Madrasatul Islah in Saraimir before I arrived eventually at Aligarh to earn a Ph.D. in economics.

The years spent in Rampur and Saraimir were full of lively interaction with Ulama. We spent most of our time discussing the Qur'an, the traditions of the Prophet, commentaries on the Qur'an, fiqh (jurisprudence), and usul-e-fiqh, or principles of jurisprudence. That this happened in the company of young men my age, fired by the same zeal, was an added advantage. We had each chosen a subject – political science, philosophy, economics – that we thought would enhance our understanding of modern life. We combined modern secular and old-religious learning to produce something that would right what was wrong with the world. We received a warm welcome from Zakir Hussain (1897–1969), the former President of India, then Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University; Mohammad Aaqil Saheb, Professor of Economics at Jamia Milliyah Islamia, Delhi; and by eminent teachers at Osmania University in Hyderabad.

Our mission was to introduce Islamic ideas to economics. These were at three levels:

- A background provided by Islam's worldview places economic matters in a holistic framework.
- A set of goals for individual behavior and monetary policy,
- Norms and values, resulting in appropriate institutions.
- Maududi argued that this exercise performed in critical social sciences would pave the way



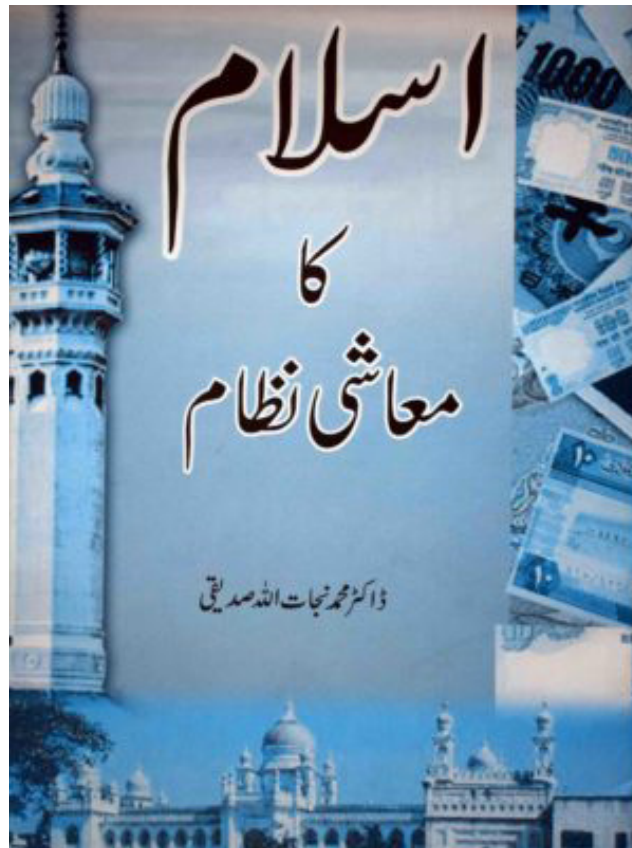
of Maududi's pieces deeply impacted me: lectures at Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow, and a scheme he proposed to Aligarh Muslim University, both in the mid-1940s, later published in a collection titled Taleemat. Under the influence of these ulama – religious scholars – I abandoned science and the engineering career I had planned. Instead, I wanted to learn Arabic, gain direct access to Islamic sources, and discover how modern life and Islamic teachings interacted. I stuck to this mission, even though I had to take several detours stretching over six years – to Sanwi Darsghah e Jamaat

for progress toward an 'Islamic society. I was fully sold on the idea. We were also influenced by the extraordinary times through which Islam and Muslims were passing worldwide. Islam was 're-emerging' after three centuries of colonization which was preceded by another three centuries of stagnation and intellectual atrophy. The great depression had just exposed capitalism's darker side, and Russian-sponsored socialism was enlisting sympathizers. We thought Islam had a chance if only a convincing case could be made.

Dr. Nejatullah Siddiqi devoted an entire book to the Objectives of Shariah (Maqasid Shariah). He did not agree with those writers who insisted on the five categories of objectives mentioned by al-Ghazali, claiming that many other purposes come under them in one way or another. He suggested more goals to be added beside and beyond the five mentioned above, such as honor and dignity of humankind, fundamental freedom, justice and equity, poverty alleviation, sustenance for all, social equality, bridging the gap between the rich and the poor, peace and security, preservation of system, and cooperation at the world level. He supports his stand by various verses of the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet, especially in dealing with the non-Muslims."

Dr. Siddiqi surveyed the history of the idea of Shariah objectives. To him, the concept of Shariah objectives has existed from the very beginning of

Islamic history. But it was al-Juwayni (d. 478/1085) who first used the term, from whom his disciple al-Ghazali (d. 505/1111) took it and divided it into five categories: Protection of religion, life, reason, progeny, and property. Ibn Taymiyah (d. 728H/1328) introduced the protection of dignity in place of progeny. He also argued that objectives should not be limited to the protection from haram (forbidden) but should include securing benefits. Thus, the



number would be unrestricted to five objectives. Ibn al-Qayyim followed the suit of his teacher, Ibn Taymiyah, and included justice among the objectives. He examined the opinions of al-Shatibi (d. 790/1389), Shah Wali Allah al-Dihlawi (d. 1172/1763), and a quick survey of the contemporary literature.

At 91, when he breathed his last in

this mortal world surrounded by his life-long partner, three sons, and two daughters, Dr. Nejat had already achieved what only a few chosen ones achieved. He ensured perpetual reward from his creator for his contributions to bringing millions into the fold of economic growth. As a result, marginalized people who lagged because of the lack of capital are in the process of building a stable financial life. Dr. Nejatullah turned concepts of divine justice and equity into practical reality. When he started his work on Islamic banking, there was hardly an institution applying religious principles; now, there are over 500 Islamic banks and thousands of other non-interest-bearing financial institutions. His legacy is there to stay and benefit people worldwide. His work has turned him into a legend, and the future generation would rightly call him the father of modern Islamic banking. His nephew, Dr. Ahmadullah Siddiq, Professor of Media Studies in Illinois, said, "It is not a loss of a family, but a loss of a generation that always looked at uncle Nejatullah as a shining source of inspiration."

Academic honours

Awarded King Faisal International Prize for Islamic Studies, 1982.

American Finance House Award, 1993

Ph.D. in Economics from Aligarh Muslim University, India, 1966.

Arabic and Islamic learning from Rampur, India, 1954.

Work experience

Professor of Economics, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, from October 1978 to the

present.

Professor of Islamic Studies, Aligarh Muslim University, India, from 1977 to 1978. (On leave from AMU from 1978 to 1983)

Reader (Associate Professor) in Economics, Aligarh Muslim University, India, from 1975 to 1976.

Lecturer (Assistant Professor) in Economics, Aligarh Muslim University, India, from 1961 to 1974.

Supervised several Ph.D. dissertations at Aligarh University, Ummul Qura University, Makkah, Imam Saud University, Riyadh, and Sokoto University, Nigeria.

Editorial and Advisory positions

Member, Editorial Board, Journal of King Abdulaziz University: Islamic Economics, Jeddah from 1983 to present.

Member International Board, Review of Islamic Economics, International Association of Islamic Economics, Leicester, U.K. from 1991 to present.

Member, Advisory Board, Islamic Economic Studies, Islamic Research, and Training Institute, Islamic Development Bank, Jeddah.

Member, Board of Trustees, AAOIFI (Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions, Bahrain) 1999 –

Member, Editorial Board, IQTISAD Journal of Islamic Economics, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 1999

Member, Advisory Editorial Board, The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences, AMSS & IIIT, U.S.A. from 1985 to 1991.

Member, Advisory Board of the Journal, Humonomics, Toronto, Canada from 1985 to Present.

Member, Advisory Board, MASS, Journal of Islamic Sciences, Aligarh,

India, from 1985 to 1997.

Editor, Islamic Thought, Aligarh, 1954-1959.

List of published books

English

1. Economics, an Islamic Approach, The Islamic Foundation, Leicester, U.K. 1999
2. Teaching Economics in Islamic Perspective, Centre for Research in Islamic Economics, KAAU, Jeddah, 1996
3. Role of the State in the Economy, The Islamic Foundation, Leicester, U.K., 1996
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5. Partnership and Profit-Sharing in Islamic Law. The Islamic Foundation, Leicester, U.K. 1985
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9. Contemporary Literature on Islamic Economics, The Islamic Foundation, Leicester, U.K. 1978
10. Economic Enterprise in Islam, Markazi Maktaba Islami, Delhi, India. 1972
11. Some Aspects of the Islamic Economy, Markazi Maktaba Islami, Delhi, India. 1972
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13. Recent Theories of Profit: A Critical Examination. Asia Publish-

ing House, Bombay, India. 1971

N.B: Some of these books have also been published in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Indonesian, Malay, Hindi, and Bengali languages.

Urdu

1. Tahreek Islami Asr Hazir Men (Contemporary Islamic Movement). 1995 Markazi Maktaba Islami, Delhi, India.
2. Quran awr Science (Excerpts from Syed Qutb's Tafsir with a detailed Introduction). 1978 Markazi Maktaba Islami, Delhi, India.
3. Nash'at Saniyah Ki Rah (Towards Islamic Renaissance) 1974 Markazi Maktaba Islami, Delhi, India.
4. Insurance Islami Ma'ishat Men (Insurance in Islamic Economy). 1974 Markazi Maktaba Islami, Delhi, India.
5. Ghair Sudi Bank Kari (Interest Free Banking) 1969 Markazi Maktaba Islami, Delhi, India.
6. Shirkat awr Mudarabat Ke Shar'i Usul (Sharia Principles of Partnership and Profit-Sharing). 1969 Markazi Maktaba Islami, Delhi, India.
7. Islam Ka Nazarriyah Milkiyat (2 Vols.) (Islam's Theory of Property). 1969 Islamic Publications, Lahore, Pakistan.
8. Islam Ka Nizam-e-Mahasil (Translation of Abu Yusuf's Kitab al Kharaj). 1966 Islamic Publications, Lahore, Pakistan.
9. Islam Men `Adl-e-Ijtimat`i (Translation of Syed Qutb's al `Adalah al Ijtimaiyah fi'l Islam). 1963 Islamic Publications, Lahore, Pakistan.
10. Islami Adab (edited) (Islamic Literature) 1960 Markazi Maktaba Islami, Delhi, India.

What does it mean to a Muslim child in a non-Madrassa School in India?



By Syed Ali Mujtaba

A recent book “Mothering a Muslim” by Nazia Erum captures some of the realities of what it means to be a Muslim in non-Madrassa Schools in India.

A day after a bomb blast in Europe in 2018, a teacher at a popular Noida school read out headlines to her Class VI students. A student loudly called out the name of the only Muslim boy in class; ‘Yeh kya kar diya tumne?’ he asked. The teacher heard the exchange but did not say a word. Some of the things that kids are apparently calling their Muslim peers in primary schools are ‘Osama’, ‘Baghdadi’, and ‘Mullah’, and are asking them to ‘Go to Pakistan.’ Katuwa, Jihadi, and Mussallah are other such slurs that are non-Muslim kids’ favorite vocabulary, to address Muslim peers in school.

Some thirteen years ago, a friend’s son was in a fancy Delhi pre-school, voted by a leading education journal, as “the best preschool in India”. It decided to schedule its annual PTA meeting on Eid-ul-Fitr – the ‘big’ Eid, a joyous celebration at the end of the month-long Ramzan fast. I don’t have to tell this audience that it is the biggest Muslim festival of the year, on par with Diwali for Hindus and Christmas for Christians. The mother of the Muslim child gently chided the Principal and the teacher but eventually went for the PTA.

But there was more to come. One day, a phone call came from the principal. “You know, it was Eid on November 17, and now December 17 is Muharram. Is that important to you? Because you see, due to the Commonwealth Games, we lost a lot of working days and there are only three children, who are Muslims

in the school, and one of them is a Pakistani diplomat’s child, and they are out of town anyway. None of our teachers are Muslim, so I will speak to the one remaining parent to keep the school open, is it is OK with you?” My friend was in fury, the same preschool had declared Karva Chauth a holiday because all the teachers were busy fasting for the wellbeing of their husbands. She ranted, she raved but she ‘did not escalate the matter’. “I don’t want my three and half-year-old child to be singled out as the one with the troublesome mum,” she said.

Salman, 13 years old, was one of three Muslim boys in Class VIII in the upper primary school at Nandnagri, in Delhi. Most children participating in cultural programs are Hindu. I want to participate in cultural programs too. I learned a patriotic song but the class monitor in charge of deciding who gets to participate refused to take me to the event.... Sometimes I don’t like being Muslim. I feel insecure when there are Hindu- Muslim fights because most Hindus get together and surround the Muslims. My mother asks me not to stray too far from home when there are communal tensions.

Sara, 14 years old, in Class VIII in a government upper primary school in Nandnagri, regrets choosing Urdu instead of Sanskrit as her second language. All the girls who chose Urdu sat in the same classroom. There are some teachers who... say: ‘you Muslim people have no brains, you read the Quran and pray to Allah, but don’t respect knowledge.’



... A few months ago, we had a substitute teacher who said the floods in Uttarakhand happened because Muslims have opened meat shops there. She said that it's a place of worship for Hindus but Muslims go there and treat God badly. It's because of Muslims, she said, the disaster happened, to pay them for their sins. We felt really bad when she said all this about Muslims. The whole time she kept saying Muslims do this, Muslims do that, and no one in the class objected because we were afraid of being hit by her.

Sahir is 12 years old, in grade 5 in a government school in Qutab Vihar in southwest Delhi says; we don't feel like going to school because the teachers always single us out to beat us. The Hindu boys laugh at us. The teachers don't let us participate in any sports. Class monitors are always chosen from among Hindu boys and they always complain about us Muslim boys. The teachers never believe us. They insult us by saying 'You children come to school only to eat and to collect [scholarship]

money, but you don't want to study.' Whenever they check our workbooks, they make negative comments about our work and throw the workbooks at our faces.

Another boy, Javed, from the same school, said: The Hindu boys are allowed to go to the toilet but we are not given permission. Whenever the teachers are angry, they call us Mullahs. The Hindu boys also call us Mullahs because our fathers have beards.

One of our classmate's father came to submit a form to the school. The teacher referred to him as 'the man with the beard' and made fun of him in front of the whole class and laughed at him. All the Hindu children laughed too and we Muslims felt terrible. ... Only the Hindu boys are happy in this school.

So, this is where we are today. A nation forged from the fires of Partition was promised a secular India but 75 years later the nation still blames 9 and 10-year-old Muslim children for sins their fathers did not commit. Why our

classrooms are paying this price for such tough conversations we never had?

The Indian education system is one of the largest in the world with over 1.5 million schools, 8.5 million teachers, and 250 million children. If that is what is happening in non- Madarsa Schools, then advocating reform in the Madrasa system of education should think twice about which system of education needs reforms, the non-Madrassa school or the Madrasa. Is calling Muslim children names, an act in nation-building or an anti-national activity? The moot point here is those who are working for reforming the education system in India should stop the kettle from calling the pot black.

This piece is an excerpt from Farah Naqvi's talk delivered on October 19, 2022, at the 5th Anita Kaul Memorial Lecture, 2022, titled 'The Elephant Outside the Classroom: Education for a Democratic India.' It was delivered at the India International Centre, New Delhi

Worrying signs for the Indian Economy



By: Mohammed Mustafa



Global Outlook

Global growth has significantly slowed, putting the world economy in danger of entering into a recession. Unexpectedly swift and synchronised monetary policy tightening, especially in several important advanced economies, has been brought about by extremely high inflation. Although this tightening was required for price stability, it has significantly worsened the global financial situation, which is significantly slowing down activity. Given the latencies between monetary policy changes and their economic effects as well as the expectation that real rates will keep rising, this drag is only going to get worse. The Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine continues to send shockwaves, particularly in the markets for energy and other commodities. In light of this, confidence has drastically decreased. The United States, the euro area, and China are the three main economic engines in the globe. This era of acute weakness will have negative spill over effects for emerging market and developing economies, many of which are already dealing with declining domestic

conditions. Demand pressures, such as those brought on by the lingering effects of prior policy assistance, and supply shocks, such as interruptions to both global supply networks and the availability of important commodities, have both increased global inflation. Along with tight labour markets, significant currency depreciations in relation to the US dollar have also contributed to inflation in several nations. Worldwide, inflation is still high and consistently exceeds central bank targets in almost every country. Despite the likelihood that inflation will gradually decline over the year, there are indications that underlying inflation pressures may be growing stronger. In response, central banks all across the world have tightened policy more quickly than anticipated. Risk appetite has been hampered by tightening monetary policy in developed economies, a strong currency, geopolitical unrest, and high inflation, which have slowed bond issuance in emerging markets and developing nations. The slowdown in global economy and worries about the likelihood of a worldwide recession are the main reasons why most



commodity prices have decreased, albeit to various degrees. However, they are still high by historical norms, which prolongs the problems brought on by food and energy shortages. While natural gas prices in Europe rose to an all-time high in August before falling down to pre-invasion levels, crude oil prices have consistently plummeted since their peak in mid-2022. Along with sluggish demand, non-energy costs, notably metal prices, have fallen. Food price inflation is still very high in certain emerging markets and developing economies even if food prices have declined from earlier peaks.

Indian Economy

According to the most recent GDP figures, the Indian economy expanded 6.3% in the most recent quarter over the same period previous year. This forms the basis that India may be the fastest growing economy in the world. But given the choice of the base year, annual growth rates are infamously deceptive. Any enthusiasm based on year-over-year growth rates is not only misleading, but it also

conceals the reality of an impending economic crisis, especially in light of the economy's dramatic downturn in growth rates during 2016–17, followed by the pandemic. With a per capita income decrease of 0.25% annually, India's average income in 2021–22 is lower than it was in the year prior to the pandemic in 2018–19. Take the case of farmers, the largest occupational group. Between 2016–17 and 2020–21, their income decreased by 1.5% year. Temporary workers make up the second largest group. Their pay has decreased by 0.9% year from September 2017 and September 2022. In the past five years, the incomes of nearly four in every five rural workers have not increased. However, not only rural and impoverished households have suffered a fall in revenues. Regular workers in urban areas who are better protected have not fared any better. Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data shows that the fall was primarily in metropolitan regions, where annual incomes fell by 4.2%. These projections cause grave doubts regarding the economy's total demand. Although the rural economies

have been struggling for some time, there is mounting indication that the crisis has spread to metropolitan regions and may even be affecting a significant portion of the middle class. The Consumer Confidence Survey (CSS) figures from the RBI add to the evidence of the urban economy's suffering. The net reaction to the economic situation has been negative for the majority of the last five years. The same is true for incomes, with a greater percentage of respondents reporting a drop in income than an improvement. It is obvious that the economic crisis is no longer a rural issue. Given the inflationary period, the government's challenge is not merely to increase spending on social protection to safeguard the poor and vulnerable, it also needs to enhance incomes for the majority of the rural and urban people. The only method to boost the economy's discretionary demand is to increase disposable income. Given the status of the economy, it is an unpleasant burden for this budget to boost the economy, even at the expense of the short-term goal of fiscal management.

Cupping & Hijama Wellness Clinic

has been recognized as Most Promising Hijama Clinic of the Year - 2022 by Business Mint.

Cupping & Hijama Wellness Clinic was co-founded by Muzaffar Ali Ahmed Rai and Mrs. Kohinoor Ibrahim (Both are spouse) in 2016. They started Hijama (Cupping) as a religious practice to revive the sunnah, due to less or no information about hijama among ullamas and common people in Kolkata at that time. To bring awareness and revive this forgotten sunnah they started doing various camps.

Both of them started treating patients without any fees for 4-5 years at home and office. Soon they realized the need to learn hijama in a professional way. This realization made them enrol in Simply Hijama Beginners Course, U.K. In 2016 after watching the BBC live interview on cupping by Dr. Rizwhan Suleiman they further enrolled themselves in the ICAHT Hijama diploma course U.K. After that they went to learn hijama under Prof Dr. Sharique Zafar Mumbai spoke about the contribution of the Chinese to cupping and its promotion.

In Kolkata they went to learn TCM under Dr. D. Bakshi at the Institute of Research and Integrated Medicine, IRIIM to understand traditional medicine, diagnosis, and more holistic treatments. This quest to understand the human body made them undergo 300 hrs intensive classroom course of acupuncture,

Moxibustion and Cupping. After this they found some physical training, techniques and exercises should be done during and after hijama.

To learn more into it this time they made Dr. Azhar Siddique of Delhi their mentor who guided them in sports cupping, functional cupping, rehabilitation, etc, through his M. D Cupping Course, Both Mr. and Mrs. Ali have also learnt Fascia needling from Dr M.A. Marzouq founder of Dynamic Fascia, Saudi Arabia. Mrs. Kohinoor Ibrahim has completed her P.G. Diploma in Reflexology and Aromatherapy to bring more wellness to her clients from Vedic Wellness Institute Florida. Recently, in their practice, they found the need to give proper diet to their patients due to poor eating habits and lifestyle. They also felt the need to learn weight loss techniques for there regular pain management patients.

Now, they went to learn weight loss management under Dr. Atin Banerjee in Kolkata. They both are regular students of Dr. Buddhadeb Nath Kolkata. Dr. Junaid Khan of Hijama Wellness Centre is also their teacher and mentor. So, both of them pursued academic courses in India through the best faculties and experts in this field and travelled to





various cities of India and abroad to learn Hijama, Cupping, Acupuncture, Graston and Moxibation etc. Both Mr. And Mrs. Ali has also attended a workshop conducted by ICAHT (Institute Of Clinically Applied Hijama Therapy) UK founded by DR. Rizwan Suleiman and gained knowledge under him and hands-on training one to one at Bangalore, India for 5 days on Advanced Cupping, Graston (IASTM), Spine manipulation, Fire Cupping, and Lymphatic massage Cupping, Soft Tissue Manipulation. Mr. Muzaffar Ali has spent 28 days in Mongolia for learning Chiropractic and Cupping from Dr. J. Ankhabayarf Angijral Mongolia.

Mr. & Mrs. Ali both are also co-founders of Global Academy of

Holistic Wellness (GAHW). GAHW is a government registered non profitable trust approved by Niti Ayog to train new hijama and acupuncture therapist. Cupping & Hijama is an ISO 9001: 2015 Certified a quality management system. It is also certified from American Merit Council, British Council of Complimentary Medicines. Mr. & Mrs. Muzaffar are life members of International Cupping Association [ICA], Acupuncture Science Association [ASA], International Federation Of Hijama Practioner [IFHP], they can found in World Hijama Directory. Mr Muzaffar a B.S.C. graduate from Calcutta University & PGDBM from Chennai before doing hijama was working in a pharmaceutical MNC company for 11 years.

His vast knowledge and work experience in Allopathic Pharma products made him take his new venture Cupping & Hijama Wellness Clinic become one of the best hijama clinic in Kolkata. His approach of connecting with people and treating them after proper consultation with love, patience and guidance has made his clinic a unique one of its kind. His priority to make his clients happy with different approaches every time is commendable.

In next few years cupping and hijama wellness clinic aims to create new practitioners under him. Muzaffar Ali and his wife Mrs. Kohinoor Ibrahim also plans to add sunnah foods and more prophetic medicine in their clinic.

Miss Maryam Mirza

honored with the special Award by American Federation of Muslims of Indian Origin (U.S.A. & CANADA)

The little angel Miss. Maryam Mirza, the student of grade 8, who has already taken an initiative to create fascination and love among students about reading with the help of her project Mohalla Library under The Read and Lead Foundation. Her noble work is recognized at international level by American Federation of Muslims of Indian Origin (U.S.A. & CANADA) and she will be honored with the special award by AFMI in the program which will be held on 31st December and 1st January.

About AFMI

AFMI is philanthropic charity formed by American Muslims of Indian Origin in the year 1989. AFMI strives to improve the socio-economic status of the underprivileged Indian Muslims minorities through education. Since it was founded, AFMI has remained steadfast in its mission to achieve 100% literacy amongst Indian Muslims.

Miss Maryam is currently the student of Iqra Urdu Girls High School, Aurangabad. The first Mohalla library has been established by her with her own 300 books in the period of lockdown on 8th January 2021 in



the vicinity of Baijupura, Lane no 20 with the name of Bharatratna Dr.A.P.J.Abdul Kalam. As per the information given by the secretary of Read and Lead Foundation Mirza Abdul Kayyum Nadvi (the father of Miss Maryam), under the guidance of Read and Lead Foundation and Federation of Minority Educational Organization (FAME) 30 Libraries for kids in slum areas have been started by Maryam.

The AFMI has taken into consideration the noble aim of Miss.Maryam and decided to felicitate her in their 33rd

Annual Function. With the achievement of Miss Maryam one more feather has added in the marvelous educational

What is AFMI ?

AFMI is a philanthropic charity formed by American Muslims of Indian Origin in the year 1989. AFMI strives to improve the socio-economic status of the underprivileged Indian Muslim minorities through education. Since it was founded, AFMI has remained steadfast in its mission to achieve 100% literacy amongst Indian Muslims.

Our Vision

Improve literacy and economic Status of Muslims in India.

Help Muslims in India to contribute towards social, political and economic development of India.

Strive to advance the cause of underprivileged masses in India in general, and Muslim masses in particular.

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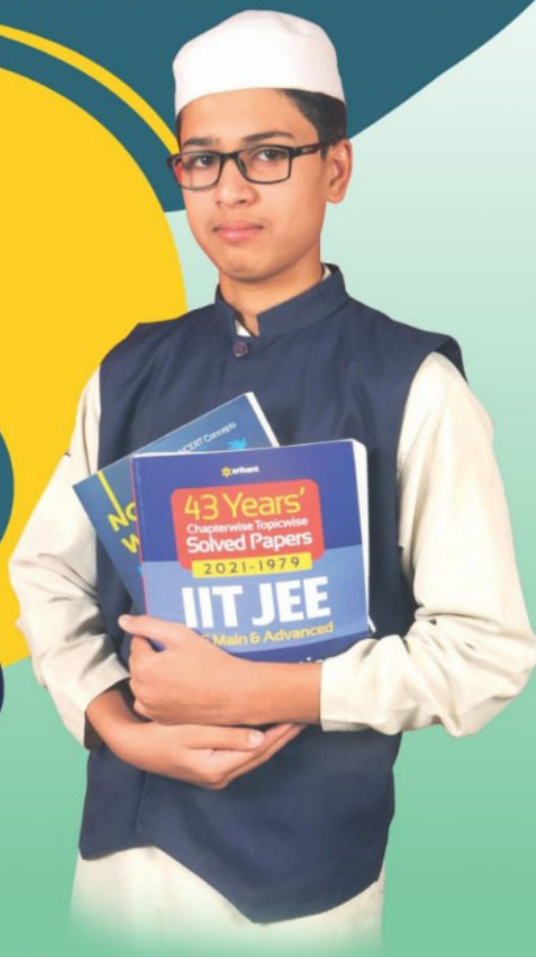
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