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*Dear Reader,*

We begin this edition with **Robert Glazer** who red flags individuals armed with rapid-fire stats and impressive sounding facts, people he terms “Fast Factors.” His advice is to take a step back, slow the conversation down and ask clarifying questions. Next up is **Eddy Quan** who trashes as garbage advice the mantra “fake it till you make it,” and we concur that the one thing that makes you memorable is your authentic self.

**Tim Paradis** then writes about Jen Fisher, the human sustainability leader at Deloitte, and her battle with burnout. She says that to really fix what’s wrong with work we need to have deeper and more thoughtful conversations. Employers need to push back on the idea that workers who cut through piles of work must be in good shape. “If we are rewarding and promoting people that work 24 hours a day or respond to email in 10 seconds flat, then that’s the perception of what it takes to be successful.” And therein lays the problem.

**Greg Satell** follows on with holding AI accountable by making our systems explainable, auditable, and transparent. Our machines inherit our human weaknesses and frailties, and we need to make allowances for that.

Back-of-the-book we have our minister Sherry Rehman for climate change and environmental coordination step down, yielding to the demands of democracy. That she has done so on the eve of the crucial COP28 Summit in Dubai may add up to substantial loss and damage for us.

Read on, and fasten your belts to successfully negotiate some very challenging times, Insha’Allah 😊

\*Articles curated from online content by JJ highlighting professional and expert knowledge on ‘Managing People, Business and Yourself’

## INSIDE:



### You Don’t Know The Term Fast Factor, But You’ve Probably Argued With One

By **Robert Glazer** | 8 min read



### why “fake it ‘til you make it” is garbage advice

By **Eddy Quan** | 8 min read



### Deloitte’s human-sustainability chief wants to help employees beat burnout.

By **Tim Paradis** | 11 min read



### We Expect Humans To Be Accountable. We Should Expect No Less Of AI

By **Greg Satell** | 8 min read



### Nature Calling for ACTION STATIONS!

**Adil Ahmad** | 9 min read

# You Don't Know The Term Fast Factor, But You've Probably Argued With One



**Robert Glazer** | 8 min read

As communication technology accelerates and information becomes more readily accessible than ever, many of us have found ourselves in discussions with individuals armed with rapid-fire stats and impressive-sounding facts. I like to call these people “Fast Factors.”

You’ve probably encountered several of these Fast Factors. These are the people who present every point like the opening statement of a trial, using favorable statistics and data points to make their pitch, and omitting information that undermines their viewpoint. Often, these individuals have such a polished, confident delivery that you might find yourself doubting your own

understanding or intuition about a topic, especially if you disagree with them.

These interactions create a sensation I have felt many times, and I suspect many others have too: the unique intimidation of not having the information needed to counter a Fast Facter on the spot. While it's good to be self-aware of what you don't know, it's also crucial to realize that sometimes a Fast Facter's airtight arguments are not as impenetrable or impressive as they seem.

Sometimes a Fast Facter's assertions are based on [incomplete or inaccurate data](#). Sometimes they take stats out of context to make them appear more convincing, or they act as if [correlation indicates causation](#), when it often does not. The most devious Fast Facters intentionally play these tricks, knowing that their convincing delivery will bulldoze you out of challenging their claims. Before you can even process or verify something they've said, a new statement is already flying at you.

I'll share an example I have heard often, which I offer because it is a good illustration of the topic—not because I am aiming to express any point of view on gun control.

People who oppose stricter gun laws often use the talking point that “Chicago has the toughest gun laws and yet the most gun violence.” At face value, it sounds like a clear, compelling argument against the effectiveness of stricter gun regulations.

However, when you investigate, you'll discover that a majority of the firearms used in Chicago's violent crimes are [sourced from out of state](#); they are purchased in areas with more lenient regulations and trafficked into the city. Additionally, many of Chicago's laws are superseded by state precedent and have changed in the last decade; the letter of the law is stricter, but the implementation of the law is comparable to many other cities.

This example demonstrates how surface-level statements can be misleading, if not downright erroneous. Most topics are far too nuanced to be solved with a single statement, no matter how convincing it sounds at first.

In this era of high information velocity, we should resist the urge to prioritize speed and immediacy over accuracy. When you find yourself facing a Fast Facter, remember that it's okay to take a step back, slow the conversation down and ask clarifying questions. If you feel overwhelmed by, or uncertain about, the information you're receiving, granting yourself the time to research and build an opposing viewpoint is not surrender. Instead, taking this time to do your homework can give you the clarity you need, or give you the chance to craft a well-informed counterargument for your next interaction with the Fast Facter.

We all feel the pressure for instantaneous results, but not every discussion needs to conclude immediately. Often, there's power in saying: “That's interesting. Let me look into it and come back to you.”

While there's a place for rapid assertions and well researched viewpoints—and the Fast Facters who offer them—these practices should not be used as intellectual bullying tactics by those with a natural ability for speaking and arguing. No matter how strong our convictions are, we should strive to allow space for patience, rigorous research, nuance and good faith counterarguments.

The next time you encounter a Fast Facter, remember velocity doesn't always indicate veracity. Don't let the pace others set deter you from digging deeper and pursuing better insight and clarity ■

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#### Source:

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/you-dont-know-term-fast-facter-youve-probably-argued-one-glazer/>



# why “fake it ‘til you make it” is garbage advice

By Eddy Quan | 8 min read

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One of the biggest mindset traps you can fall into when you're starting out in any new endeavour is to believe the “fake it ‘til you make it” meme.

If you've never heard of it, the idea is that since you're not successful YET.... You should act as if you are already successful then at some point in the unforeseen future, you can drop the “fake it” part and simply make it.

Makes sense right?

Yep. For years, it also made perfect sense to yours truly.

I kept faking it and faking it and faking it for what seemed like forever.

And at no point did I feel like I had made it.

It wasn't until I watched a documentary last night about the making of Apocalypse Now (which in my correct opinion is the greatest movie of all time) did I realise that fake it ‘til you make it is subpar advice that you should ignore completely.

(Sidenote: the documentary is called Hearts of Darkness and you can watch it for free on YouTube. Look it up if you're a fan of the movie).

If you haven't seen the film, it's about a commando named captain Willard (played by Martin Sheen) who is sent into the jungles of Vietnam in the midst of the war to assassinate a green beret named Kurtz (played by Marlon Brando)

But it's the beginning of the film I want to talk about.

The movie starts with Willard trapped in a sweaty hotel room. He's going crazy as he's reflecting on all the horrors he's seen and experienced in the war and he's losing his mind eagerly waiting for another big mission.

I won't go into too much detail here (watch the film if you haven't already) but Sheen does a phenomenal job in portraying a man going crazy you'd think he's actually going crazy himself.

He's jumping around in his underwear, shadowboxing, screaming, talking to himself, crying and at one point he punches the mirror, breaks it and cuts his hand and starts bleeding all over the bed sheets.

The acting is so powerful you forget it's Martin Sheen as you're pulled into the mind and world of captain Willard.

For years, I thought it was just another example of good acting (and it was).

But I didn't realise how real it was until I watched that documentary last night. Turns out, that scene was shot on Martin Sheen's 36th birthday. He was completely drunk and at one point during the shooting of the movie, he considered committing suicide and also had a heart attack.

The part where he breaks the mirror? That was improvised. Sheen actually broke the mirror and cut himself while he was drunkenly dancing around that hotel room with Francis Ford Coppola (the director) talking to him and hyping him up behind the camera.

And that's just ONE scene.

Everything about Apocalypse Now is about as authentic as it can be for a fictional movie.

Which is why it's one of the most memorable movies of all time.

So how does this apply to you?

Well, it just goes to show that when you're building a brand online and growing an audience....**faking it til you make it isn't enough.**

Because building a brand and growing an audience isn't about faking it 'til you make it.

Like Sheen did with Willard, you have to BECOME the brand.

This is why I stopped recommending people copy, remix or otherwise rehash viral content.

Yes, you might make a little bit of money and go viral a few times....

But all you're doing is destroying the one thing that makes you memorable....

And that's your authentic self.

Now I'm not saying you need to get drunk, do drugs and go breaking mirrors and doing other silly things in order to gain attention.

But whatever character it is you're portraying through your personal brand needs to be real.

And being real sometimes means being strong but sometimes it also means being vulnerable.

Anyway.....

That's all I have for you today.

I hope you take this insight seriously because it's a big one and will do tremendous things for your brand.

Your man

Eddy "stop faking it and just become it"  
Quan■



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# Deloitte's human-sustainability chief wants to help employees beat burnout. She says the best solutions go beyond vacation and office yoga — and involve undoing 100 years of routine.

Tim Paradis | 11 min read

Jen Fisher used to be the type of boss who'd email her team at 2 a.m.

"I wasn't a person that anybody wanted to work for," she told Insider.

Fisher, the human sustainability leader at Deloitte, said she was a far different type of boss before she realized she was going full tilt, surging in her career, yet feeling burned out. A subsequent cancer diagnosis only underscored the need for change.

She ended up beating both cancer and burnout. But between the two, breaking free of her hard-charging approach to work proved more difficult. "I often felt that cancer was easier than burnout. When you're going through chemo, it's visible. Burnout isn't," she said in [a recent talk](#) at TEDxMiami.

The challenge Fisher faced in remaking her relationship with her job is why she thinks many of the recent debates over how and where we work are falling short. To really fix what's wrong with work, Fisher said, we need to have deeper, more thoughtful conversations. And, she added, we need to recognize these are systemic issues that will take time and effort to fix.

"We've been working the same way for 100 years." The only difference is that we have technology. So this is not an easy solve," she said in a recent interview. Fisher said leaders need to step back and think about all the issues swirling around work — from debates over [returning to the](#)



[office](#) to how much of our lives we should [devote to our jobs](#) — in novel ways

Stepping back is something Fisher has learned to do. Before her reckoning with how she did her job, she said, she didn't prioritize getting to know what made those who worked for her tick, what their personal lives looked like, what their needs were, and what "lit them up or bummed them out."

"I didn't take the time to do that because I was a taskmaster. I was like, 'We're here to get a job done and we're gonna get it done.'"

Now, seven years cancer-free, Fisher is trying, in part, to make up for lost time. [In her role](#), she works to help leaders inside and outside of Deloitte focus on the well-being of individuals, organizations, climate, and society.

Yoga and meditation apps won't do

Fisher sees a complex challenge facing employers. Various snapshots indicate workers across industries are feeling [stressed out](#)



Deloitte's Jen Fisher. Odette Fernandez Lopez

[and overworked](#). And there can be gaps in perception: [Bosses can overestimate](#) how well their people are feeling.

Part of the disconnect could be because many employers have spent heavily in recent years to offer programs designed to help workers zap stress.

Fisher said that leaders and others are taking well-intentioned — and often useful — steps to help workers but that, on their own, yoga classes, meditation apps, or subsidies for other activities that promote well-being won't cut it.

"Anybody that has been in a place of experiencing overwork or overwhelm or even trending towards burnout knows that those things are good, but they're not going to solve the problem," she said.

## Workers are resetting their expectations

Younger people, in particular, have [challenged workplace norms](#) that began to crack during the pandemic. Fisher said generational tug of war over how we should work is nothing new but that settling some of the disputes will require a willingness to rethink how work is structured.

"How do we come together and have these real conversations to say, 'It's not that anybody is lazy or doesn't want to work hard. It's just that they want to work differently.' And how can we adapt our business and our models to serve that?"

Fisher said buzzy phrases like quiet quitting and [lazy girl jobs](#) — "I don't know why it's only girls," she quipped — signal a resetting of expectations for many workers.

"They're very clearly saying to leaders, 'I want to work for an organization that cares about me and who I am,'" Fisher said, adding that those workers want employers that care about their lives outside of work and that care about more than just raking in money.

## Flexibility isn't a cure-all

Fisher said developments like hybrid work can help though they won't fix everything. One reason is because giving workers some choice over where they work might not matter much if they're overwhelmed.

"Flexibility doesn't solve all the problems of well-being." If workloads are too heavy — and people are still toiling away in the middle of the night like Fisher often did — that's not good for well-being, she said.

Fisher said employers need to push back on the idea that workers who cut through piles of work must be in good shape. "I was highly productive. But I was struggling with my mental health. I was on my way to burnout and the downstream impacts of my actions and behaviors on my team were detrimental," she said.

"If we are truly rewarding and promoting people that work 24 hours a day or respond to email in 10 seconds flat, then that's the perception of what it takes to be successful," Fisher said.

Her own journey toward a more balanced approach to work leaves Fisher optimistic that broader change is possible.

"We're at the point of having these really hard conversations," she said ■

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### Source:

<https://www.businessinsider.com/how-to-beat-employee-burnout-symptoms-work-deloitte-human-sustainability-2023-8?>



# We Expect Humans To Be Accountable. We Should Expect No Less Of AI

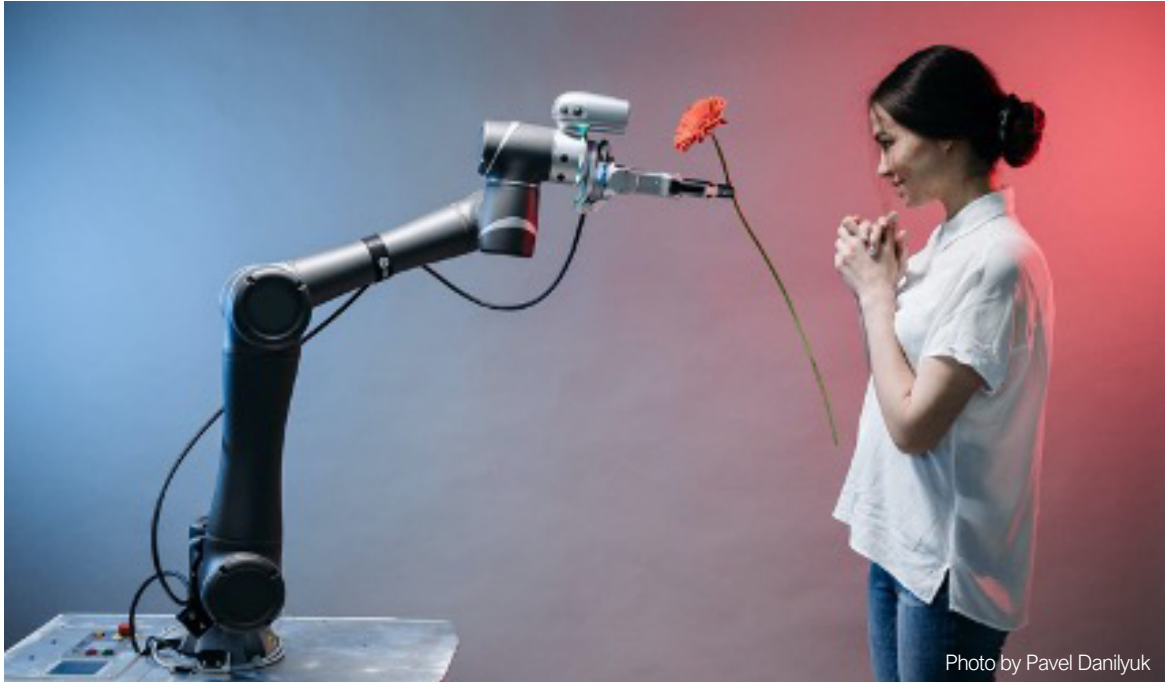


Photo by Pavel Danilyuk

By Greg Satell | 8 min read

About ten years ago, IBM invited me to talk with some key members on the Watson team, when the triumph of creating a machine that could [beat the best human players](#) at the game show Jeopardy! was still fresh. I wrote in Forbes at the time that we were entering a new era of [cognitive collaboration](#) between humans, computers and other humans.

One thing that struck me was how similar the moment seemed to how aviation legend [Chuck Yeager](#) described the advent of [flying-by-wire](#), four decades earlier, in which pilots no longer would operate aircraft, but interface with a computer that flew the plane. Many of the macho “flyboys” weren’t able to trust the machines and couldn’t adapt.

Now, with the launch of ChatGPT, Bill Gates has announced that [the age of AI has begun](#) and, much like those old flyboys, we’re all going to struggle to adapt. Our success will not only rely on our ability to learn new skills and work in new ways, but the extent to which we are able to trust our machine collaborators. To reach its potential, AI will need to become accountable.

## Recognizing Data Bias

With humans, we work diligently to construct safe and constructive learning environments. We design curriculums, carefully selecting materials, instructors and students to try and get the right mix of information and social dynamics. We go to all this trouble because we understand that the environment we create greatly influences the learning experience.

Machines also have a learning environment called a “corpus.” If, for example, you want to teach an algorithm to recognize cats, you expose it to thousands of pictures of cats. In time, it figures out how to tell the difference between, say, a cat and a dog. Much like with human beings, it is through learning from these experiences that algorithms become useful.

However, the process can go horribly awry. A famous case is [Microsoft’s Tay](#), a Twitter bot that the company unleashed on the microblogging platform in 2016. In under a day, Tay went from being friendly and casual (“humans are super cool”) to downright scary, (“Hitler was right and I hate Jews”). It was profoundly disturbing.

Bias in the learning corpus is far more common



than we often realize. Do an image search for the word “professional haircut” and you will get almost exclusively pictures of white men. Do the same for “unprofessional haircut” and you will see much more racial and gender diversity.

It’s not hard to figure out why this happens. Editors writing articles about haircuts portray white men in one way and other genders and races in another. When we query machines, we inevitably find our own biases baked in.

## Accounting For Algorithmic Bias

A second major source of bias results from how decision-making models are designed. Consider [the case of Sarah Wysocki](#), a fifth grade teacher who — despite being lauded by parents, students, and administrators alike — was fired from the D.C. school district because an algorithm judged her performance to be sub-par. Why? It’s not exactly clear, because the system was too complex to be understood by those who fired her.

Yet it’s not hard to imagine how it could happen. If a teacher’s ability is evaluated based on test scores, then other aspects of performance, such as taking on children with learning differences or emotional problems, would fail to register, or even unfairly penalize them. Good human managers recognize outliers, algorithms generally aren’t designed that way.

In other cases, models are constructed according to what data is easiest to acquire or the model is overfit to a specific set of cases and is then applied too broadly. In 2013, Google Flu Trends [predicted almost double](#) as many cases there actually were. What appears to have happened is that increased media coverage about Google Flu Trends led to more searches by people who weren’t sick. The algorithm was never designed to take itself into account.

The simple fact is that an algorithm must be designed in one way or another. Every possible contingency cannot be pursued. Choices have to be made and bias will inevitably creep in. Mistakes happen. The key is not to eliminate error, but to make our systems accountable through, [explainability, auditability and](#)

[transparency](#).

## To Build An Era Of Cognitive Collaboration We First Need To Build Trust

In 2020, [Ofqual](#), the authority that administers A-Level college entrance exams in the UK, found itself [mired in scandal](#). Unable to hold live exams because of Covid-19, it designed and employed an algorithm that based scores partly on the [historical performance](#) of the schools students attended with the unintended consequence that already disadvantaged students found themselves further penalized by artificially deflated scores.

The outcry was immediate, but in a sense the Ofqual case is a happy story. Because the agency was transparent about how the algorithm was constructed, the source of the bias was quickly revealed, [corrective action was taken](#) in a timely manner, and much of the damage was likely mitigated. As [Linus’s Law](#) advises, “given enough eyeballs, all bugs are shallow.”

The age of artificial intelligence requires us to collaborate with machines, leveraging their capabilities to better serve other humans. To make that collaboration successful, however, it needs to take place in an atmosphere of trust. Machines, just like humans, need to be held accountable, their decisions and insights can’t be a “black box.” We need to be able to understand where their judgments come from and how they’re decisions are being made.

Senator Schumer is reportedly working on legislation that will promote more transparency, but that is only a start. The real change has to come from within ourselves and how we see our relationships with the machines we create. Marshall McLuhan wrote that media are extensions of man and the same can be said for technology. Our machines inherit our human weaknesses and frailties. We need to make allowances for that ■

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### Source:

<https://greg-satell.medium.com/we-expect-humans-to-be-accountable-we-should-expect-no-less-of-ai-94726cb1fd41>

# NATURE CALLING for ACTION STATIONS (NCfAS#18) Calamity Jane takes 5!



With COP28 just weeks away in Dubai, Pakistan's frontline and most formidable ecowarrior Senator Sherry Rehman, the erstwhile Federal Minister for Climate Change & Environmental Coordination, has left the stage in deference to the democratic process.

But, as her parting present, she did fire off three potent op-ed salvos in The News International, two of which dealt with Pakistan's climate journey during her 16 months in office (August 14 & 15), and the third with financing climate

**“Pakistan faces a fairly quantum challenge if climate response and development needs are to be met, amounting to a staggering \$348 billion between 2022 and 2030” – World Bank's Country Climate and Development Report**

action (August 19). All three articles warrant a detailed comment which I will endeavor to make in the not too distant future. However, the third on financing climate action bears immediate attention.

“The global climate crisis has left no country untouched, but it is the developing world that is facing the most severe impacts,” starts Sherry, stating that which has by now become quite obvious to even the diehard deniers.

“For countries like Pakistan, already struggling with economic instability, climate change ‘burn’ presents not just a threat to the environment but also stresses our national and human security. It has already claimed thousands of lives and caused billions of dollars in damages. At one estimate,

just in 2022, Pakistan faced a cumulative drag of eight per cent on its GDP from climate change.

## Notoriously elusive

“Despite climate finance pivoting as the backbone of climate action, it remains notoriously elusive for many developing countries on the frontlines of the climate crisis. The international community in 2019/20 had pledged to mobilize \$100 billion per year in climate finance for developing countries, but the actual disbursement has fallen well short of the target, and climate finance has both been short and slow to reach the countries that need it most. This lack of funding and adaptive capacity is one of the main reasons why climate action is being held back in Pakistan and other developing countries.

“The recently created Loss and Damage Fund remains yet to be operationalized, let alone act as a trigger for financing shortfalls in climate emergencies in the Global South, and many fear that if it too remains unfunded due to lack of political will and out-of-the-box solutions for funding, it may well become another ‘ghost fund’,” writes Sherry.

“According to the World Bank's Country Climate and Development Report, Pakistan faces a fairly quantum challenge if climate response and development needs are to be met, amounting

**“The recently created Loss and Damage Fund remains yet to be operationalized, let alone act as a trigger for financing shortfalls in climate emergencies in the Global South” – Senator Sherry Rehman**



## “The writing on the wall is beyond clear; we are up the Creek without a paddle” – Adil Ahmad, author

to a staggering \$348 billion between 2022 and 2030. To achieve deep de-carbonization, \$196 billion is necessary, while \$152 billion is needed for adaptation and resilience, and this is the bare minimum.

### Recovery trap

“Strategic responses are further complicated by recurring floods and the return of the El Nino phenomenon that creates a recovery trap, with countries like Pakistan



struggling to rebuild and reconstruct while simultaneously coping with ongoing heat waves and extreme weather events.

These are no small numbers. From severe heat waves that melt our glaciers, to catastrophic floods last year that have devastated one-third of Pakistan, it is clear to policymakers that the climate crisis has compounded our nation's challenges in ways that even today go unrecorded.”

### ANALYZE THIS!

Robert de Nero is a personal favorite, amongst others, and when he teamed up with Billy Crystal for the psycho-comic thriller and its sequel, it brought on a dopamine rush! The writing on the wall is beyond clear, provided one is willing to take off the blinkers and face up to the brutal truth, which is, we are up the Creek without a paddle; the paddle is known to be stashed somewhere



in a numbered Swiss account, if there is still such a thing; and the so-called developed First World, the perpetrator of this entire mess that we find ourselves in, is increasingly beginning to resemble the much derided Third World.

Ceteris paribus never did apply; all other things were never equal. Global warming and climate change have become the ultimate spanners in the works. Those whom we look to for salvation

**“Strategic responses are further complicated by recurring floods and the return of the El Nino phenomenon that creates a recovery trap” – Senator Sherry Rehman**

are casting about for salvation themselves. We will just have to plug the many leaks in our boat, ourselves. That's the bottom line. There's a massive hole in our bucket and it needs to be plugged post haste.

Back to Sherry who through her deeds has accumulated a formidable amount of authentic authority as an impressive ecowarrior who has battled tirelessly, intelligently and successfully on the world stage and at home, and I'm sure we will see her impactful presence at COP28 in an individual capacity ■

Column by Adil Ahmad, Correspondent, TCS Octara.Com