

IN CONVERSATION

'I think the clear lines are laid down'

Shashi Tharoor shared his thoughts on several topics in an exclusive interview

SAKSHAT CHANDOK

Shashi Tharoor - author of 18 books and Member of Parliament from Thiruvananthapuram had come to the AKLF in Kolkata speak on the topic of 'The Great Indian Paradox', and was in conversation with novelist and publisher David Davidar. They spoke on several topics, the most popular of those being Narendra Modi, thoughts on religion (Tharoor has written a book titled Why I Am a Hindu in the past), Hindutva, and the general political scenario in the country. In an exclusive interview with *The Statesman*, Shashi Tharoor shared his thoughts on a variety of matters. Excerpts:

Q In your book *Pax Indica*, you have devoted your largest chapter to India's relations with Pakistan. If the Congress comes to power post Lok Sabha polls, what would the party's strategy be with regard to Pakistan?

I think the clear lines are laid down. We are fundamentally about protecting the safety of our people; so dealing with terrorism is a priority for us. We would expect Pakistan to take serious action to dismantle the terror that has been created there and punish militant perpetrators, particularly those responsible for 26/11. Beyond that, we are a little more prepared to

explore constructive engagement than this government appears to have been and we will have to act on the basis of our own experience. In the past, civilian governments in Pakistan have been unable or unwilling to challenge the military stranglehold there. So, much of the change may require Pakistan to change in a way that the military has a less dominant voice, or it may require the military to have a conciliatory view of its own interest, as it did under General Musharraf. But when we are in government, we will have to look at all the circumstances of the time; but I would say that the Congress brings so many decades of experience with it regarding these issues that people should be reassured that the country will be in safe hands.

Q You have often spoken about the difference between hard power and soft power, saying that India uses soft power in matters of diplomacy, whereas countries like China and Pakistan often use hard power. Do you think the current BJP government has shown hard power in its governance, both internally and externally?

No I don't think so, because if it had then the preposterous Rafale deal would not have taken place, which is one case where the security of the nation has been under-

mined in the interests of a favoured few. Putting a deal like this above national interest is no sign of hard power at all. Even on the grounds of soft power they have done a lot of damage by their intolerance at home which is reflected in media coverage abroad; if one would pick up a newspaper in the western world, they would see negative stories about India regarding things like communal violence and attacks on Muslims and Dalits. I think this government has been bad for both hard and soft power. Creating a movie out of a 'surgical strike', when it was n't one, is propaganda, not hard power. It was a cross border raid like many that have been conducted in the past under the UPA.

Q Apart from a film on the surgical strike, another film called *The Accidental Prime Minister* was released recently which courted a lot of controversy as did the book it is based on, written by Sanjaya Baru. What is your view on such films?

I'm a strong believer in freedom of expression and I think people should have the freedom to write books we disagree with and make bad films. I haven't watched this particular film, but if you read five reviews and four of them tell you it's terrible, why would you go and watch it? That's my attitude regarding the film, but I would

never call for any film to be banned unless it has incited hate or committed libel. In this particular case, you're looking at a climate three months before the election and this is purely one more campaign and does not deserve serious discussion.

Q Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, in parliament, claimed to have known you for the last four decades.

Well first let me just say that I have known him for the last four and a half decades; he was the general secretary of the Delhi University's student union when I was president of the St. Stephens college students union, so we go back to 1974. Also, I

feel a great deal of concern about his health and I wish him a speedy recovery.



Beware of the dangers

Botox has been the perfect potion for restoring youth on faces for years now. However, this elixir of youth should only be used under expert guidance

BE HEALTHY

PRESS RELEASE

DEBRAJ SHOME

Plastic surgery is no longer confined to the operation theatre and seems to be spilling into the living rooms of common people as a dangerous trend is fast catching on the world over. The recent case of 29-year-old UK based model, Rachael Knappier after she got injected a botox injection at a house party by a beautician and her lips painfully swelled, is ringing alarm bells about OTC usage of the drug. While botox is increasingly being used as a beauty enhancer, it has its downsides and if left to an untrained medical professional, can spell disaster and even death.

Botox has been the perfect potion for restoring youth on faces for years now and successful administration of botox can change the entire appearance of your face. However, this so-called elixir of youth should only be used under expert guidance.

Botox is a protein with the scientific name of a lethal neurotoxin call botulinum, which is produced by bacteria clostridium botulinum found naturally in soil, lakes and forests. This bacterium is also found in the intestinal tracts of mammals and fish. There are many uses of botox in both aesthetic and medical procedures and is not actually a dermal filler. When injected, it blocks the nerve impulses that cause the muscles to contract that causes wrinkles and lines while dermal fillers add fullness to areas that have thinned due to aging.

In order for muscles to contract, nerves release a chemical messenger, which sends a message to muscle cells to contract or shorten. When injected, botox causes the reduction in muscle contraction and relaxes them. Therefore, botox works as a 'shield' between the brain and the muscle, causing the muscles to stay still. Botox has been in demand for a long time now and its common aesthetic uses include smoothening wrinkles, reducing fine lines on the face, treating drooping brows, changing the shape of the face and smoothening crow's feet.

Basically everything known to mankind is a poison when used indiscriminate-

ly and without logical reasoning. Everything is a drug or a poison, depending on the amounts used. One paracetamol used for a headache is a drug offering immediate relief yet if you took 20 tablets in one go the same very drug could prove lethal and kill you. So, how you use something is most important in the results it gives you. In general, botox is an extremely safe drug which primarily blocks out the nerve signals by temporarily paralyzing the face when injected in the facial muscles. When there is no movement in those areas, wrinkles may be softened, reduced or even removed. Not more than 50 units are needed for facial anti-aging treatments and to cause you any harm as much as 3000 units need to be injected. So, there is a large safety net of 60plus times of the amount of botox being injected in you.

Botox is injected by injectors hence your injector needs to be trained and a specialist so that the chances of side effects with botox are almost zero. With a trained person, should there be any small alterations required, it is easy to perform. It is absolutely imperative to undergo the treatment under an expert.

It's important to remember that Botulinum toxin is one of the most poisonous substances known to man and if not administered and used carefully it can lead to grievous harm. Bad botox can cause the eyebrows to elevate so much that it can give you a permanent surprised look. While this is temporary, it can still cause you immense heartburn. A badly done botox job can cause drooping of the eyelid or brow if injected near the eye. It can also lead to weakness and paralysis of nearby muscles or cause hives, rashes or itching.

While such accidents should not happen and they can even be life threatening if immediate action is not taken to reverse the effect of the injection, a few dos and don'ts are a must to avoid such incidents. Only go to a qualified plastic surgeon or dermatologist and do not be afraid to ask the doctor's credentials and years of experience. Take a feedback about the surgeon from other genuine patients. Do not be lured by the current 'fad' of botox and only take the botox injec-

tions on parts that are best suited for you. Let your doctor decide what is best for you as what worked for your friend may not work for you. Follow the post care instructions carefully and if you notice any burning, fever or an itching sensation at the site of the injection go to the doctor immediately. Botox is a highly safe and a sure shot non-surgical way to get the smooth age defying look for your face. All the myths and horrors associated with botox can easily be dispensed with and it should not be an inhibiting factor keeping you away from your dream looks. If you've made up your mind for the treatment, go for it and don't let unfounded doubts play on your mind. In trained hands, it's truly a 'wonder medicine'.

The writer is a facial plastic surgeon and director, Esthetic Clinics



For happy feet



Crocs, a casual footwear brand, recently announced the launch of its 109th store in India at Ballygunge, Kolkata. The 580 sq ft store was inaugurated at a glittering soiree graced by actress Payel Sarkar.

The new store showcases the recently launched Spring Summer '19 collection along with an array of styles which include sandals, loafers, sneakers, flip-flops, and clogs suitable for all age groups.

Speaking at the launch event, Sarkar said, "I am ecstatic to be a part of Crocs new store launch in Ballygunge."

Footwear is a quintessential element of a women's wardrobe and this brand offers just the right mix of comfort and style to keep your feet happy all day long. I am amazed to see their wide range of collection, which goes well with different wearing occasions."

Redefining hospitality



Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Ltd recently entered New Town Kolkata, with the eighth property of its social-catalyst brand Zone by The Park. Firdad Hakim, minister in charge of urban development and municipal affairs, government of West Bengal, was the chief guest at the inauguration ceremony. Karan Paul, chairman, Apeejay Group, and Vijay Dewan, managing director, Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Ltd, were also present along with Debasish Sen, chairman and managing director, HIDCO.

Zone by The Park Kolkata, is adjacent to the Biswa Bangla Convention Centre in the new IT and residential hub of the city. It has 117 rooms, three banquet halls and two boardrooms making it ideal for weddings, conferences, events and high-powered meetings. Also, Bazaar, the signature restaurant of Zone, inspired by multi-hued charismatic native markets is located on the third floor with 146 covers. The hotel has two bars as well -- The Lobby Bar, an exclusive bar at the lobby level and Ten, located by the rooftop pool with spectacular views of the surrounding cityscape.

Rajoshree Das

