

Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

# August 15

August 15, 1975 is a cruel and dark episode in our history. The undisputed leader of this nation was assassinated along with his family members on this day. The people of this country considered him the father of the nation. After thirty-four years of our independence why do we fail to give him that position? Why do we try to undermine his great contribution to the nation? Robert Browning, the Victorian poet, described the fickleness of human mind in his famous poem 'The Patriot'. The patriot entered into the city as a hero to be worshipped and loved by everybody. Just to have a glimpse of him even the pained people were peeping through the windows and all others gathered in the streets to shower him with flowers. The poet says, 'It was roses and roses all the way in my path.' People were about to be mad to welcome him. But alas! The people of his county seriously misunderstood the same patriot just after one year. The same people crowded in the street to witness the cruel death of the patriot. They started throwing stones at him. His forehead was bleeding and hands were tightly tied behind. He would be slaughtered and people gathered there to satisfy their hidden evil instincts. The extreme opposite behaviour of his countrymen puzzled him.



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the undisputed leader of this country and was gifted with many noble virtues. But he was a human being. He was not above the mistakes that other human beings are liable to commit.

Md. Masum Billah  
Wapda Road, West Rampura, Dhaka

# Bomb blasts and fundamentalism



As a Bangladeshi living abroad it's shocking for me to see the surge in fundamentalism in Bangladesh in recent years.

The frustrating aspect of this being the fact that the Bangladesh government was in a state of consistent denial about this until recently, even though the world media were adamant about some prevalence of fundamentalism in Bangladesh. But I don't think it's too late to tackle the root of fundamentalism in Bangladesh because Bangladesh has long been a moderate Muslim country.

Any act of terrorism in the name of religion is crime that we cannot condone.  
Maksud Mohiuddin, AFLAC Inc, US

We the overseas Bangladeshi students in Sydney, Australia, express our deep condolence for the victims of the bomb attacks and condemn those who committed the crime.

We are shocked and worried not only about what happened but also about what might take place in the future.

So for the welfare of the people of Bangladesh and for those staying abroad, we hope that the government and the opposition will take some initiative to counter terrorist activities.

We don't appreciate hollow statements only.  
Nazmul Hossain, Sydney, Australia

Killing innocent Muslims is no way to create an Islamic State but will only lead to misunderstanding about Islam. Reading the report on the string of bomb blasts in the country, I have the feeling that Bangladesh is becoming the training ground for terrorists. As the speculation goes, the men behind the blasts want an Islamic Bangladesh. To me this approach of the perpetrators of the crime appears to be very poorly calculated.

If they are following Baghdad's trend they should remember that even the Islamists in the Middle East are getting negative feedback from the people for killing innocent Muslims.  
Naim Saif, Canberra, Australia

The bombings all over Bangladesh resulted in the death of three innocent civilians and many more have been injured. My condolences go out to the family of the deceased. I can't imagine what they must be going through. No one expected such a horrid ordeal.

According to BBC, the Jamatul Mujahideen Bangladesh has left leaflets taking responsibility for these attacks. The government had banned this group with some other groups. It is shocking that these groups could actually create such havoc and go unnoticed. The 50 members who have been caught if convicted for the bombings should be sentenced to prison for life or given the harshest form of punishment for terrorising the citizens of our country. Because most of these attacks were geared towards doing the worst damage since they were set off in crowded areas and near government offices, this should be taken as an attack against the country. The government needs to make an example of these people and our courts need to give a speedy, steadfast

verdict.

This is not the first bombing in Bangladesh and unless and until we have strong punishments and better security these mad men, who have a misconstrued view of Islam, will continue to insult the religion and its peaceful followers by causing harm. We need to have a system that allows people to warn the police if they have any information of the crazy men trying to do something again. As citizens of Bangladesh it should be our responsibility to be watchful.  
Zeenat Z. Syed, UPS Deployment

I was surprised to learn that people in Bangladesh practised terrorism in the name of Islam. It is truly a sad moment for the country.

I was also surprised to learn that Awami League leader, Sheikh Hasina, blamed Prime Minister Khaleda Zia for the incidents. She said, 'The bomb attacks were made at the instigation of the prime minister.' 'She left Dhaka for China giving green signal to carry out the blasts' (The Daily Star). What was she thinking when she made this comment? It simply doesn't make any sense. Why does she come up with these vile thoughts? This is not the time to point fingers at rivals, it is time to solve the problem, to take charge and make sure this sort of crime is not repeated in the future.  
Sam, On e-mail

The bombs in London exploded on the day the G8 summit was being held. The same tragedy was about to recur two weeks later in the same city. The professional and skilled intelligence service of Scotland Yard could not do anything to stop these catastrophes. From this perspective, Bangladesh's intelligence agencies cannot be held entirely responsible for Wednesday's bombings across the country. But having said that, we have to take the immensity of the bombings into consideration. Around 460 bombs exploded in 61 districts. It will not be implausible to assume that at least a thousand people were involved in this master plan. And yet our intelligence services could not do anything whatsoever to prevent the bombings. Surely it is not asking too much to expect a bit more competence from them.

People behind the bombings wanted to create panic and they have done it successfully. They have ruined the country's image.  
A concerned Bangladeshi  
Brussels, Belgium

I was astonished to hear the news of the bomb blasts on Wednesday. About 460 bombs blasted at a time across the country. How is it possible? Where were Rab, police, DB and all other intelligence services?

Now it is clear to us that our national security is seriously threatened. It has to be improved as a matter of top priority.  
Sadat Shahriar  
Dept. of EEE, RUET



## The 'unresolved' past

It was really shocking and disturbing to learn about the probable CIA link to the killing of Bangabandhu as revealed in the series of articles by journalist Lawrence Lifshultz. There were many conspiracy theories about the perpetrators of and the motives behind the killing of Bangabandhu and his family, but never before was the story of US involvement in the August 15 carnage so vividly laid out. If it is true, it would surely be an addition to the growing lists of failures and misplaced priorities of US foreign policy that we are having the misfortune to observe in today's world.

Taking a closer look at today's world affairs would reveal a rather disturbing pattern of how the wrong policies of the world's sole superpower gave birth to so many of the world's growing problems. If al-Qaeda is to be blamed for 9/11 (as is believed and assumed to be proven beyond doubt in the West as opposed to the growing cynicism among ordinary Muslims as to the identity of the real perpetrators), the question that immediately comes to mind is who created Bin Laden and his al-Qaeda in the first place? If the cold war wasn't played the way it was in the futile ground of Afghanistan, then maybe its byproducts wouldn't have become such a great menace today.

The latest revelation about the CIA involvement in August 15 carnage would surely fuel the general anti-US feelings among the ordinary Bangladeshis that originated from the recent unilateral acts of the US in the international arena.

As an ordinary Bangladeshi, I wished our foreign ministry took the issue seriously and made every diplomatic effort possible to unearth the truth. It's rather a disgrace that our domestic political play-out will not allow for any official quest for truth on this issue.  
Zubair Sadeque  
Breckenridge Court, Pittsburgh

## A little adulteration!

While the whole adulteration movement isn't exactly perfect, I am glad something drastic has been done and has caught people's attention. This is similar to BNP's 'Operation Clean Heart' about three years back when the military was suddenly mobilised to deal with crime. Not perfect, not pretty but somewhat effective. However, for trivial purposes I feel that some adulteration in food should remain in tehari ghars, phoochka stands, jhal moori and chhotpot eateries. I pride myself here in the US on the strength of my stomach to withstand the deadliest of dishes regardless of cuisine, because I've had some training at Dhaka's finest eating spots! Imagine if the 'amr-wala' outside schools was suddenly

finied by a magistrate and sent to jail for not using 'Mum mineral water' to wash the amras. I feel a little adulteration is part of street-food and the culture associated with it and is a very Southern/Eastern thing we should hold onto.

Note that I am not suggesting or promoting use of chemicals, dyes or lethal substances in food.  
Ashfaq Siddiqui, Palo Alto, USA

## Licence to hit?

Do we beat a prisoner in jail for being a murderer? Do we beat a mammal, which doesn't understand our language? So why do we support the way children are beaten in schools and houses? To many, beating children is something regular. In the name of discipline

teachers use abusive words to children, they learn them and use these words in future. If a child does something wrong, teachers or parents must talk first, if it doesn't work then they must think about other alternatives, but not any violent action.

I strongly believe beating children will not help anyone, rather it will only create new problems.  
Tahsin Hyder  
Maple Leaf International School, Dhaka

## Non-transparency in governance

The regime may take corrective actions to maintain transparency in approving non-essential projects; and in the handling of tenders. As

encourage continuity of projects approved by the preceding regime for implementation.

Now businessmen prefer to import goods available locally, to make more profit, through questionable documentation and palm greasing. The import policy is tax on import of non-essential items; and proper protective levies are not imposed to discourage wastage of precious foreign exchange, (imagine import of fruit juices from several thousand miles away, of which more than 90 per cent is water! Why not import the powder or raw materials, and do the processing locally?). One big neighbour is capturing some vital sectors through exports, and the adverse trade balance is reaching more than one billion

Parliament through TV Channel, which were simply superb. Although our parliament was not at par with British Parliament but there was scope to improve the skills of parliamentarians with uninterrupted practice. But these days we have very few parliamentarians having the necessary political background and acumen.

Money, influence and other undesirable factors matter much in winning elections and naturally the parliament is losing its position and image.

This is a problem that deserves closer attention.  
Khizir Ahamed  
Segun Bagicha, Dhaka

## Studying religion

As many of you know that all students at US colleges/universities can take for credits course(s) on Bible study and such courses are regularly offered, often as part of the general education curriculum. These courses contribute to the requirements of more or less 120 semester credits for a four-year bachelor degree in any discipline including engineering, biology, economics or music. Not only at the level of higher education, Bible study courses are offered as electives in high schools and junior highs in 37 states (see The National Council on Bible Curriculum Web site).

There are about 400 million Muslims in South Asia. Majority of us know how to read the Holy Koran in Arabic without understanding it. I am afraid if a typical imam or peer has knowledge of the Arabic language and clear understanding of the messages of the holy book and Hadith. It is therefore easy for a few politically motivated people to mislead the young minds. Besides, there is hardly any institutional arrangement (other than the madrassahs (?)) at the secondary, higher secondary, college or university levels where students have access to the study of the Holy Koran and Hadith with understanding. One of my relatives studied Islamic History at Dhaka University for her B.A. (Hons.) and M.A. According to her, the curriculum was primarily about the Muslim empires and rulers.

The present crisis created by terrorism can be largely attributed to ignorance of the teachings of the Holy Koran. Islamic scholars condemn violence and killing of innocent people. The Muslim clerics of London, UK, passed a fatwa a few weeks ago against violence and killing of innocent people. Although the majority of the alleged terrorists happen to be Arabs, I am afraid if they studied Islam with understanding as part of their curriculum.

Amin U. Sarkar  
1200 University Street  
Spearfish, SD, U.S.A.

# Humayun Azad



The obscurantist forces attacked Dr. Humayun Azad. They could not kill him but he remained their target. He was not allowed to live.

Azad's dead body arrived from Germany with a normal certificate(?). His attackers are still not punished, even after one

year of his death. Is anybody listening?  
Russel Mahmud  
BL College  
Khulna

sons, students and servants are tortured physically and mentally. Dipu, a student of class four, died in hospital on July 5, after being hit by his teacher in the school. Some days later his teacher also killed a madrassah student. Do teachers have a special licence to hit and kill?

A teacher should be a student's best friend. They teach us to impart knowledge. If a student faces any kind of problems in class than it is the teacher who has the responsibility to solve those problems. Children will adopt behaviours of the adults. When parents or

politics has become a business, there is scope for making money on the side for private profit.

The Dhaka City Corp is a big defaulter, with grey projects, where the QC (quality control) is poor. Now meaningless projects are approved to make the city more beautiful. No disciplinary actions are ever announced in the media. Also, in the ADP, the mega projects are re-tendered several times, in a questionable manner, presumably to favour certain earmarked tenders. Then there is the tendency to amend the tender conditions midway. Political jealousies do not

taka. No comment from the regulators! The bilateral talks are a sham, when there is no change of heart/approach.  
A Mahasen, Dhaka

## An insipid parliament

In the past eminent lawyers, doctors, educationists and intellectuals manned our parliament and its proceedings were full of substance, commensurate with parliamentary norms. I had the opportunity to listen to debate and discussion of British

# War against terrorism

War against terrorism is now a much talked about issue all over the world. Everybody knows that it commenced after the 9/11 terrorist attack and its purpose was to eliminate terrorism. At first the US led coalition forces attacked Afghanistan to oust the radical Taliban regime as well as to break the al-Qaeda network.

The peaceful people of the world never support any kind of terrorism.

And they never support any unjust war in the name of war against terrorism. A few days ago, the picture of an American soldier's mother whose son had died in Iraq war was published in several newspapers in our

country. Mr. Blair has already denied the linkage between Iraq war and London blasts. But the mayor of London, Mr. Kin Livingstone, has admitted that there could be a link between Iraq war and London blasts. So why Mr. Blair or Mr. Bush don't want to realise this truth? They have to understand what's the real cause of terrorism, who are the real terrorists and why al-Qaeda has become a terrorist organisation? Above all, they have to pull out from Iraq as soon as possible, then they have to solve the Palestine problem. Otherwise, peace will always elude them.  
Mustafa Iqbal Shahadat  
Dhaka University



# Blair's target

I was appalled going through a feature by Chintito in the last issue of SWM. British Prime Minister Tony Blair has recently taken some measures against terrorism in the UK.

The fact is that the measures that were taken are directed against Islam as he has resolved to oust/deport Islamic clerics, shut down the mosques and so on. People like Robin Cook and others along with the majority of the Britons (70 percent) think that British soldiers should be pulled out of Iraq immediately & blame/accuse Tony Blair of telling a big lie to them regarding its fight against Iraq on the false pretext that Iraq possessed WMD. Bush & Blair have unleashed hell on Iraq that has turned the land into a graveyard. Millions of innocent people have already lost their lives most of whom are women & children. One wonders if these civilised leaders of the civilised people amuse themselves with deaths, then what is left for humanity?

At this point of time any sane mind can comprehend the dire point that these people out there are deliberately stigmatising Islam and its followers as terror & terrorists. Measures taken by Blair to fight terror are proof enough of his mindset which unfortunately will frighten moderate Muslims residing in the UK. Tony Blair should follow traditions of his country and its people.

Finally, I strongly believe that Mr. Blair will not be able to answer the questions that Chintito has raised in his article.  
Rafiqul Islam Rime, Agrabad, Chittagong

