can consider the situation that prevails in Pakistan. Radical Islamists, many of them who have already turned into militants, have never been able to grab state power by wining the polls. And possibilities of it are very slim. But the Islmists have succeeded in turning Pakistan into a failed state.

The rise of youths early February had flickered hopes against all despair. That was a reaction to corrupt politics. Youths who organised the unprecedented protests at Shahbagh and elsewhere in the country believed that the government had politicised the trial of Jamaat leader Abdul Qauder Mollah and made an underhand deal with Jamaat. However, the spirit of the youths at Gonojagoron Mancha fizzled out due to pervasive political culture. The main opposition BNP has taken a stance against the Gonojagoron Mancha. The government and the ruling AL initially had used the youths in their favour. But the government itself took a stance against Gonojagoron Mancha when the youths started criticising the government. At one stage the law enforcers dismantled the Gonojagoron Mancha from Shahbagh immediately after they forced Hefajat men to leave from Shapla Chattar. Many people believe the rise of fanatic forces--Hefajat-e Islam as an outcome of the Gonojagoron Mancha.

The collapse of Rana Plaza on April 24 reminds people of more dangerous consequences of the country's corrupt politics. The eight-story Rana Plaza was built defying laws. But no action was taken against the owner of the Plaza, Sohel Rana during the illegal construction, as he is a man of ruling Awami League's youth's front. More than 700 people were killed and several hundreds were injured in the collapse. That is still a nightmare for the people. However it has been a glaring example of acute failure of the government to uphold the rule of law. And the failure allowed crooked politicians and government officials to consolidate the rule of individuals. There are numerous buildings like Rana Plaza built defying building codes.

People are living with fear. They do not know for sure what awaits them in the days to come. Whether more faulty buildings will cave in causing more deaths or they will have be subjected to more political street violence in the remaining months of 2013. They do not know how many more nightmares are in store.

The writer is Senior Reporter, The Daily Star.



The sudden rise of radical Islamists under the banner of Hefajat-e Islam is a threat to law and order and stability.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN